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MARY-MICHELLE DECOSTE

READING DANTE'S *VITA NUOVA*

... the reader of the *Vita Nuova* is encouraged to uncover the rules of the game, the principles of exclusion and inclusion for the *Vita Nuova* itself. The critic who tries to solve the *libello* is responding to a challenge laid down by Dante.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Stillinger

The reader who accepts what Stillinger sees as Dante's challenge faces a difficult task indeed. For, as I will argue below, the rules of this "game" change unexpectedly and are meant to confuse and mislead the reader. As the *Vita nuova* unfolds, the narrator creates and discards a series of what I will call "model readers" of the text. I will contrast these model readers with the actual reader, who is forced to choose which model he or she most resembles, an identification likely to change a number of times over the course of reading Dante's book.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the reader never occupies a stable position in relation to the text. The narrator finally loses, however, at his own game. I will argue that Dante's text is in part the story of a narrator who seeks to create authority for himself over his readers, but who ultimately fails and is unable to exercise control over either his reader or his text.<sup>3</sup> While many critics read Dante and the narrator of the *Vita nuova* as one,<sup>4</sup> others sug-

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<sup>1</sup>Stillinger, *The Song of Troilus*, 53.

<sup>2</sup>The actual reader I refer to is the modern reader, although I believe that my argument would apply to the medieval reader as well. For an examination of the medieval reader of Dante, see Noakes, *Timely Reading*.

<sup>3</sup>Noakes locates Dante's realization of a lack of authorial control in the *Commedia* rather than in the *Vita nuova*: "According to Dante at this time [of the writing of the *Vita nuova*], the poet is responsible for making sure readers understand what lies beneath the surface of words and do not fall into traps of misinterpretation. Only later (as illustrated in the Paolo and Francesca episode) does he come to realize that such protection of the reader exceeds the author's powers." *Timely Reading*, 76.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Ahern, "The Reader on the Piazza" and, to a lesser extent, Stillinger.

gest a split between the two. Vincent Moleta, for example, refers to the “author-persona now calling up and ordering the experience of his past,”<sup>5</sup> and Domenico De Robertis writes that “la funzione dell’autore è quella secondaria . . . dello ‘scriba’.”<sup>6</sup> I would like to use this idea of an “author-persona,” that is, of a persona who conforms imperfectly to the author, in order to read the narrator as a character created by Dante, or at least as a younger Dante with whom the author of the *Vita nuova* does not entirely identify. I will argue below that Dante uses this narrator and the narrator’s confusion (confusion both created by and used against the narrator) to alert his audience to the complexity of reading, the shortcomings of language, and the dynamic relationship between author and audience.<sup>7</sup>

In the *Vita nuova*’s *incipit*, the narrator immediately puts the reader in a subordinate position:

In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria dinanzi a la quale poco si potrebbe leggere si trova una rubrica la quale dice: *Incipit vita nova*. Sotto la quale rubrica io trovo scritte le parole le quali è mio intendimento d’assemblare in questo libello e se non tutte, almeno la loro sentenza. (I, 1)<sup>8</sup>

Robert Pogue Harrison describes how time has revealed to the narrator that which the protagonist and the reader have yet to learn: “*Sentenzia* here means the principle of narrative coherence that orders the temporal mass of the past and places its events on a linear and teleological trajectory. [. . .] A past event receives its meaning from the outcome it contributes

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<sup>5</sup>Moleta, “Forward,” 3.

<sup>6</sup>De Robertis, “‘Incipit vita nova’ (VN., I),” 12.

<sup>7</sup>My argument here is nearly the opposite of what Noakes claims in her “Hermeneutics, Politics, and Civic Ideology in the *Vita Nuova*.” According to Noakes, “the reader, if not already possessed of the narrator’s superior hermeneutic skills, may at least expect to acquire them in the course of reading what is in any case just a short book. Both the narrator and the reader will then occupy together a special position: they will be an elite, constituted on the basis of hermeneutic qualifications” (46). Robin Kirkpatrick prefers the word “cell” to Noakes’ “elite” in “Dante’s Beatrice and the Politics of Singularity.” I will resist what Robert Pogue Harrison, in *The Body of Beatrice*, calls the “almost irresistible compulsion to read [the *Vita nuova*] against the background of Dante’s later works, above all the *Commedia*” (151) and leave comparison with the episode of Paolo and Francesca aside.

<sup>8</sup>All quotations from the *Vita nuova* are from the edition of the Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli (Milan, 1984), a reproduction of Michele Barbi’s 1932 edition.

to bring about.”<sup>9</sup> Without disagreeing with Harrison, I want to focus here on the effect the narrator’s superior position has on the reader, who must ask, Who is the narrator, the “io” speaking here? Without this information, the reader cannot yet know how to position him or herself in relation to the narrator. Nor does the narrator specify who wrote either the words that he discovered or the rubric under which they appear; the author’s agency is absent. And what is the “poco” that appears before “*Incipit vita nuova*”? The reader must accept the narrator’s assessment that it is not important. Furthermore, the narrator has taken it upon himself “d’assemblare” the words he finds written, “e se non tutte, almeno la loro sentenza.” If *assemblare* is taken to mean *copiare*, the reader understands that the narrator has access to an original text that it is his job to reproduce faithfully.<sup>10</sup> The narrator thus acts as an intermediary between the author of the words and those who will read them. Yet, copyists frequently make mistakes or may edit or censor material, and the reader has no opportunity to check the copy against the original. Furthermore, an imitation always differs at least slightly from its model, so if *assemblare* is taken to mean *imitare*, the reader is aware that an imperfect copy is being produced. In any case, the narrator has a privileged position in relation to the author of the “libro de la mia memoria,” a position the reader does not enjoy. The narrator is the first model reader presented in the *Vita nuova*, and he is a difficult one to imitate because the relationship between words and their meaning, the “sentenza,” is already clear to him. The reader can be sure that the narrator’s interference will be felt, since the narrator admits that he will not copy all the words, but he will at least relay their general sense. The actual reader is thus in a rather precarious position; with no access to the original text, he or she must rely on the judgment of the narrator, who has yet to prove himself trustworthy.

The narrator is quick to exploit his prerogative not only just to relay

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<sup>9</sup>Harrison, *The Body of Beatrice*, 140. I will follow Harrison’s distinction between the narrator and the protagonist of the *Vita nuova*, the narrator being the one who speaks in the present tense, recalling events from the past, and the protagonist being the one experiencing events as the narrator describes them. Because these two characters become conflated at various points throughout the book, this distinction can be difficult to maintain; I use it only to distinguish between the one who is looking back from a position of superior knowledge and the one who is looking ahead. These two characters converge definitively at the end.

<sup>10</sup>Battaglia defines *assemblare* as follows: “1. fare una cosa sull’esempio di un’altra; copiare, ritrarre da un esemplare; rappresentare, riprodurre; imitare 2. trascrivere da un testo originale, mettere in copia.” ad vocem.

the meaning of words rather than to reproduce them, but also to delete things altogether. In the next chapter, after describing the first time he saw Beatrice, the narrator says “E però che soprastare a le passioni e atti di tanta gioventudine pare alcuno parlare fabuloso, mi partirò da esse, e trapassando molte cose le quali si potrebbero trarre de l’esempio onde nascono queste, verrò a quelle parole le quali sono scritte ne la mia memoria sotto maggiori paragrafi” (II, 10). Having already asserted his superior skills in reading, the narrator here asserts his superior skills of judgment: he is able to tell the difference between *maggiore* and *minore*. It is on this basis that he decides what material to include in the “libello” and what material to exclude. Again, the author of the words the narrator finds written in the book of his memory remains anonymous; if the narrator himself wrote them, he does not say so. The reader, who has no access to the censored material, never has the opportunity to develop skills of judgment and must once again rely on the narrator to determine what is worthwhile.

As he describes his first vision, the protagonist joins the narrator in demanding trust from his reader without having earned it. After being greeted by his lady for the first time, the protagonist returns to his room where he falls asleep. He has a vision in which Love appears to him, holding Beatrice in his arms and the protagonist’s heart in one of his hands. Love awakens the sleeping lady and makes her eat the heart while the protagonist looks on. Then Love and Beatrice ascend into heaven. In this whole passage, what appears and what only seems to appear are confounded by the repetition of the verbs “apparare” and “appare”: “l’apparimento,” “apparve,” “parve,” (III, 1) “apparve,” “parea,” “parea,” (III, 3) “parea,” “parea,” (III, 4) “parea,” “parea,” (III, 5) “parea,” (III, 6) “parea,” (III, 7) “apparita,” “appare,” (III, 8) “apparuto” (III, 9). The reader cannot know what the protagonist actually saw and what he only thinks he saw, and thus is not sure what to believe.

After awakening, the protagonist decides to make his vision known:

Pensando io a ciò che m’era apparuto, propuosi di farlo sentire a molti li quali erano famosi trovatori in quello tempo: e con ciò fosse cosa che io avesse già veduto per me medesimo l’arte del dire parole per rima, propuosi di fare uno sonetto, ne lo quale io salutasse tutti li fedeli d’Amore e pregandoli che giudicassero la mia visione, scrissi a loro ciò che io aveva nel mio sonno veduto. (III, 9)

The poem that follows marks the protagonist’s poetic debut. He introduces it with some pride (“io avesse già veduto *per me medesimo* l’arte del dire parole per rima” [italics mine]) and almost as a challenge to his audience (“pregandoli che giudicassero”). Two groups are called upon as read-

ers of this poem: the “famosi trovatori,” to whom the poem is addressed, and “ciascun'alma presa e gentil core,” who are addressed within the poem. I would like to propose a third group of possible readers: the “molti” introduced earlier in the narrative who have an imperfect understanding of the relationship between the narrator's lady, “la quale fu chiamata da molti Beatrice li quali non sapeano che si chiamare” (II, 1), and her name. These “molti” are recalled in the description of the poets (“molti li quali erano famosi trovatori”), and they are the ones who respond to the narrator's request: “A questo sonetto fue risposto da molti” (III, 14). The address of the poem raises the question: who are these loving souls? Are they the “molti” or the “famosi trovatori?” Or both? Or neither?

Indeed, no one, the narrator says, was a successful reader of the poem at first: “Lo verace giudicio del detto sogno non fue veduto allora per alcuno, ma ora è manifestissimo a li più semplici” (III, 15). Even Cavalcanti, whose friendship the protagonist dates from this exchange of sonnets, fails to determine “lo verace giudicio.” Susan Noakes assumes that readers will, in fact, one day be able to interpret the vision: “Dreams are like Beatrice's name: their meaning can be understood only later. Deferral is inherent to their interpretation. The hope can thus always be maintained that even the simplest reader will eventually understand them.”<sup>11</sup> At the same time, she suggests that it is possible to read these words as ironic:

There is irony in Dante's assertion that, *ora*, just anyone can see exactly what his dream means. Even the few allusions discussed here make evident that its meaning is by no means “manifestissimo.” “Ora” cannot mean only “now” after [Beatrice's] death; it also means “now” that Dante has written his commentary, “now” that he has shown the dimensions of the hermeneutic expansion of which his apparently conventional love story is capable. The last line of chapter III challenges those of its readers who are not “li più semplici,” and certainly the *trovatori*, to look out in this *libello* for what does not at first meet the eye.<sup>12</sup>

It is indeed impossible for the protagonist's vision ever to be “manifestissimo;” as Noakes shows, it is full of Biblical references and dense Christian imagery.<sup>13</sup> I propose that through exaggeration (“manifestissimo a li più semplici”), the narrator is instead suggesting that the meaning of

<sup>11</sup>Noakes “Hermeneutics, Politics, and Civic Ideology in the *Vita Nuova*,” 49.

<sup>12</sup>Noakes “Hermeneutics, Politics, and Civic Ideology in the *Vita Nuova*,” 51.

<sup>13</sup>See Noakes “Hermeneutics, Politics, and Civic Ideology in the *Vita Nuova*,” 50-51.



the vision will never be clear, and the narrator will not clarify it.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the protagonist's broadcasting of his vision has further obscured the vision by inviting various differing interpretations ("fue risposto da *molti* e di *diverse* sentenzie" [italics mine]). These readings constitute an interpretive veil that becomes part of the vision's public manifestation. The vision is no longer just a vision; it has also become a text, complete with critical commentary. Called upon to read the protagonist's vision, the reader is then told that it is now already quite clear. The narrator does not, however, give readers any clues about how to read this text, implicitly accusing anyone who cannot understand it of being a worse reader than even "li più semplici."

These "molti" appear again in the form of the "molti amici" (IV, 1) who become concerned about the apparently weakened protagonist. Another group of "molti" is jealous, and wants to know what is the matter with him. He admits that it is Love, because he cannot conceal the physical signs on his face ("Dicea d'Amore, però che io portava nel viso tante de le sue insegne, che questo non si potea ricovrire" [IV, 2]). However, language, or in this case the withholding of language, allows him to maintain his secret and to encourage the confusion of his audience: "E quando mi domandavano 'Per cui t'ha così distrutto questo Amore?,' ed io sorridendo li guardava, e nulla dicea loro" (IV, 3). The physical signs are irrefutable, but by controlling language, the protagonist can control the perception of the "molti."

Nowhere is the protagonist's manipulation seen more clearly than in the case of the "donna schermo." This woman happened to be sitting directly between the protagonist and Beatrice, so that while he gazed upon his beloved, it appeared that he was really looking at the other woman. The woman looked back at him, and "molti s'accorsero de lo suo mirare" (V, 2). Taking note of this, the protagonist seizes the opportunity to deceive those who might suspect that his love is for Beatrice:

E mantenenente pensai di fare di questa gentile donna schermo de la veritate, e tanto ne mostrai in poco tempo, che lo mio secreto fue creduto sapere da le più persone che di me ragionavano. Con questa donna mi celai alquanti anni e mesi; e per più fare credente altrui, feci per lei certe cosette per rima, le quali non è mio intendimento di scrivere quì, se non in quanto facesse a trattare di quella gentilissima Beatrice; e però le lascerò tutte, salvo che alcuna cosa ne scriverò che pare che sia loda di lei. (V, 3)

<sup>14</sup>Harrison writes of III, 15, "By making such a declaration and yet refusing to disclose the dream's 'true meaning' for his reader, Dante seems deliberately to have preserved for us the dream's most essential quality, namely, its hermeneutic provocation." Harrison, "Mi pareva vedere una persona dormire nuda," 24.

Here, the protagonist assures the reader of the *Vita nuova* that there is an absolute truth ("la veritade") of which he or she is aware: the protagonist is in love with Beatrice. The reader is therefore in a position epistemologically superior to that of "le più persone;" they believe that the protagonist is in love with the "donna schermo." Thus, the reader can look with scorn upon those who do not read the situation carefully enough. Yet this position of knowledge that the protagonist has invited the reader to share is ultimately not tenable. The protagonist quickly reminds the reader that the protagonist knows more by mentioning "certe cosette," which he does not subsequently share. That which he agrees to write "pare che sia loda di lei," that is, of Beatrice. "Seems" to whom? To the protagonist? To the reader? To Beatrice herself? The reader's position of authority over other readers is again destabilized as the protagonist reasserts his superiority.

The protagonist further mistreats the reader in the seventh chapter. When the "donna schermo" leaves for a distant town, the protagonist decides to write something for the occasion:

E pensando che se de la sua partita io non parlasse alquanto dolorosamente, le persone sarebbero accorte più tosto de lo mio nascondere, propuosi di farne alcuna lamentanza in uno sonetto; lo quale io scriverò, acciò che la mia donna fue immediata cagione di certe parole che ne lo sonetto sono sì come appare a chi lo intende. (VII, 2)

Again the protagonist professes his intent to deceive those who are poor readers while claiming to reserve understanding for an elite reader or group of readers. This time, the position of the seemingly elite actual reader is threatened not by the protagonist reasserting his authority, but by a model reader. When the "donna schermo" was first introduced, the reader of the *Vita nuova* was aware of his or her position of superior knowledge. In this second case, the protagonist suggests that anyone who understands the sonnet ("chi lo intende"), *without prior knowledge of the protagonist's love for Beatrice*, might come to understand that this other woman functions only as a screen. The content of the poem suggests how this knowledge might be obtained:

O voi che per la via d'Amor passate, *attendete e guardate*  
s'elli è dolore alcun, quanto è 'l mio, grave;  
e prego sol ch' *audir mi sofferiate* ,  
e poi *imagnate*  
s'io son d'ogni tormento ostale e chiave. (VII, 3) [italics mine]

Thus, through careful attention, the model reader proposed by the protagonist here might obtain understanding of the true meaning behind the poem. The actual reader of the *Vita nuova* is therefore forced to recog-

nize that the exclusivity of the position of knowledge that he or she occupies is threatened by the keen model reader the protagonist proposes.

The poem itself is a meditation on the reader's position:

Or ho perduta tutta mia baldanza  
che si movea d'amoroso tesoro,  
ond'io pover dimoro,  
in guisa che di dir mi ven dottanza.  
Sì che volendo far come coloro  
che per vergogna celan lor mancanza,  
di fuor mostro allegrezza,  
e dentro da lo core struggo e ploro. (VII, 5-6)

The love that once spurred poetic creation is gone, so now instead of writing comes fear. Yet it comes not just instead of, but disguised as ("in guisa che di") writing, so that it is no longer love but fear that is the source of poetry. The poet implies that this writing that stems from fear is not really writing; it is only something disguised as writing. However, anxious to hide his sadness, the poet puts on a happy face. If both disguises are successful, that is, if the poet convinces others that he is happy, and if he can pass off fear's disguise as real writing, who is to know the difference? The reader, who up until this point has been denied the possibility of developing any critical skills, will be unable to recognize the poet's deception. The poem describes an uncomfortable relationship between the poet and his audience in which the poet has the power and the desire to deceive his unsophisticated readers.

The god of Love himself, who inspires poetry, teaches skills of deception to the protagonist. In the ninth chapter, the protagonist imagines Love as a pilgrim who informs him that another woman will take the place of the "donna schermo." He also admonishes the protagonist to keep this information a secret: "Ma tuttavia, di queste parole ch'io t'ho ragionate se alcuna cosa ne dicessi, dille nel modo che per loro non si discernesse lo simulato amore che tu hai mostrato a questa e che ti converrà mostrare ad altri" (IX, 6). Here, Love instructs the protagonist to use speech to deceive. The reader, then, must be extremely careful in reading the prose sections of the *Vita nuova*. The prose explications, which the narrator will later insist are meant to clarify the meaning of the poems, have instead the potential to be deceptive.

The deceit in which Love instructs the protagonist has an unintended consequence: tongues wag, and their "soverchievole voce che pareva che m'infamasse viziosamente" (X, 1) causes Beatrice to deny the protagonist her greeting. I would like to argue that this is a turning point in the nar-

rative. Prior to this moment, the narrator and the protagonist have presented themselves as in control of language and therefore of their deceptions. From this moment on, the narrator and the protagonist show themselves as struggling, mostly unsuccessfully, to regain control. This struggle takes place on two fronts. On the one hand, the narrator and the protagonist attempt further to manipulate the reader in ways upon which I shall elaborate below; on the other hand, the narrator tries to work out the relationship between the prose and the poetry of the *libello*. What he finds is that the former does not necessarily serve the latter, and that he cannot fully control the way the reader compares the two.

Love himself is a deceptive narrator and contributes to the protagonist's confusion. He appears again to the protagonist in a vision and tells him: "*Fili mi, tempus est ut pretermicantur simulacra nostra*" (XII, 3). The use here of *nostra* rather than *tua* indicates the complicity of Love in deceit. At this point, Love breaks into tears; when the protagonist asks him why, Love answers, "*Ego tanquam centrum circuli, cui simili modo se habent circumferentie partes; tu autem non sic*" (XII, 4). The protagonist questions him further: "Che è ciò, signore, che mi parli con tanta oscuritade?" (XII, 5). Love replies, this time in Italian: "Non dimandare più che utile ti sia" (XII, 5). The protagonist here shows himself to be an unsuccessful reader, vulnerable to the whims of a superior narrator (Love), just as the narrator's and protagonist's readers are vulnerable.

Why, indeed, does Love speak in such a confusing manner? Charles Singleton postulates: "Love's words are like the number nine and the sign of the true meaning in connection with the first vision: it takes the actual death of Beatrice to make them meaningful as signs and utterances. They are prophetic of her death."<sup>15</sup> It is impossible, then, for the protagonist to understand these words as they are spoken by Love; their meaning is to be revealed later. If Singleton is right, and the protagonist must wait to understand Love's words, might the reader of the *Vita nuova* also be expected to wait for a deferred meaning? As to why Love speaks in Latin, Singleton writes:

The shift from Latin to the vernacular on the part of the God of Love when he utters these last words is in itself a part of the total revelation made by the vision. For only the words in Latin are of the nature of oracle, and by being put in that language they are set apart and raised to a proper dignity. When Love changes to Italian one feels that somehow he has stepped down to the level of the poet and of everyday affairs. Thus, like the number nine, the Latin too is a sign.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Singleton, An Essay on the *Vita nuova*, 16.

<sup>16</sup>Singleton, An Essay on the *Vita nuova*, 17.

This explanation seems to me unsatisfactory, in light of a comment made by the narrator later in the work. In explaining why he does not complete a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah, which he begins in Latin, he writes,

E se alcuno volesse me riprendere di ciò, ch'io non scrivo qui le parole che seguirano a quelle allegate, escusomene, però che lo intendimento mio non fue dal principio di scrivere altro che per volgare; onde, con ciò sia cosa che le parole che seguitano a quelle che sono allegate, siano tutte latine, sarebbe fuori del mio intendimento se le scrivessi. (XXX, 2)

Why, then does the narrator deem it inappropriate to quote Jeremiah, but appropriate to quote Love in Latin? It seems particularly strange since the narrator insists that vernacular is the language of love:

E lo primo che cominciò a dire sì come poeta volgare, si mosse però che volle fare intendere le sue parole a donna, a la quale era malagevole d'intendere li versi latini. E questo è contra coloro che rimano sopra altra materia che amorosa, con ciò sia cosa che cotale modo di parlare fosse dal principio trovato per dire d'amore. (XXV, 6)

Italian, as opposed to Latin, is thus used to make things clearer to those who have difficulty in understanding. If vernacular is the language most fit to express matters pertaining to love, why does Love speak to the protagonist in Latin?

Verses of love have been used by the protagonist to deceive, first with the "donna schermo" and then with her replacement. Love commanded him to hide his real purpose behind words. Now, Love is doing the same to the protagonist. It does not matter that the protagonist understands Latin. By failing to use the language whose purpose it is to clarify matters pertaining to love, Love tells the protagonist to address Beatrice only in a round-about way: "Queste parole fa che siano quasi un mezzo, sì che tu non parli a lei immediatamente, che non è degno" (XII, 8). Yet at the same time, the words of the protagonist are meant to clarify Beatrice's mistaken belief about him, namely that he was harming the second "donna schermo." Love commands the protagonist:

voglio che tu dichi certe parole per rima, ne li quali tu comprendi la forza che io tengo sopra te per lei; e come tu fosti suo tostante da la tua puerizia. E di ciò chiama testimonio colui che lo sa, e come tu prieghi lui che li le dica; ed io, che son quelli, volentieri le ne ragionerò, e per questo sentirà ella la tua voluntade, la quale sentendo, conoscerà le parole de li ingannati. (XII, 7)



The interesting thing to note here is that the poetry, rather than clarifying anything, still must be explained by Love before it will be clear to Beatrice. Thus the reader of the *Vita nuova* and the protagonist, the “reader” of Love’s discourse, are both asked to accept deceit and deferred meaning as conditions of reading. Beatrice, in this passage, is the privileged reader. She will understand the protagonist’s true feeling (the strength and the exclusivity of this understanding emphasized by both the pronoun “ella” following the verb “sentirà” and the repetition of the verb [“sentirà,” “sentendo”]), and with this understanding, she will recognize (“conoscerà”) the liars’ words. With this, the truth about the protagonist, which at first was only partly (“alquanto” [XII, 7]) known to Beatrice, is clarified for her.

To those readers who don’t understand the ballad that follows, the narrator says:

Potrebbe già l’uomo oppore contra me e dicere che non sapesse a cui fosse lo mio parlare in seconda persona, però che la ballata non è altro che queste parole ched io parlo: e però dico che questo dubbio io lo intendo solvere e dichiarare in questo libello ancora in parte più dubbiosa, e allora intenda qui chi qui dubita, o chi qui volesse opporre in questo modo. (XII, 17)

Surely the narrator will not explain this poem in a section of his book that is not only more confusing, but that is also to be presented at an unspecified future time. The narrator’s stated intent to “solvere e dichiarare” must thus be considered forever deferred. Moreover, the narrator is quite aggressive in his refusal to help the reader at this point, using the imperative (“intenda qui”) and hard-sounding monosyllables (“intenda *qui chi qui* dubita, o *chi qui* volesse opporre” [emphasis mine]) as he draws a parallel between the reader who does not understand the poem (“chi dubita”) and the reader who objects to it (“chi volesse opporre”). The unskilled reader is thus made to feel like a belligerent reader, who, unlike Beatrice, has no one to explain the meaning of the poem.

In chapter fourteen, the narrator again attacks the unskilled reader, or the reader whom the narrator considers to be in opposition to his project in some way. After presenting a sonnet, the narrator writes:

Questo sonetto non divido in parti, però che la divisione non si fa se non per aprire la sentenza de la cosa divisa; onde con ciò sia cosa che per la sua ragionata cagione assai sia manifesto, non ha mestiere di divisione. Vero è che tra le parole dove si manifesta la cagione di questo sonetto, si scrivono dubbiose parole, cioè quando dico che Amore uccide tutti li miei spiriti, e li visivi rimangono in vita, salvo che fuori de li strumenti loro. E questo dubbio è impossibile a solvere a chi non fosse in simile

grado fedele d'Amore; e a coloro che vi sono è manifesto ciò che solverebbe le dubitose parole: e però non è bene a me di dichiarare cotale dubitazione, acciò che lo mio parlare dichiarando sarebbe indarno, o vero di superchio. (XIV, 13-14)

Here the narrator posits two model readers: one who is a follower of Love and one who is not. He admits of possible trouble spots in interpreting the poem, but then expresses his resolve not to clarify them, since for followers of Love, his words should be clear, and to those who do not follow Love, it is impossible that his words will ever be clear. The reader must choose which model he or she most closely resembles. The narrator does not admit a third possible reader, that is, one who is a follower of Love but who still does not understand the poem. This reader would be forced to doubt the degree of his or her fidelity to Love. To such a reader, explanation would not be "indarno," but no explanation is forthcoming. Nor does the narrator specify why confusion on the part of the reader would be "impossibile a solve." From what the narrator says, it would seem that this should be the job of the prose sections, that is, "per aprire la sentenza de la cosa divisa." As Singleton writes, "The intention and substance of a poem, that part of a poem which reason can use, is conceived of as being on the inside of a poem (intus), and a division serves to "open up" the poem so that reason may lay hold of that substance."<sup>17</sup> However, in this section, reason is completely left out of the equation. The only readers who are able to understand the poem are those who meet certain qualifications prior to their reading of it, that is, those who are followers of Love. The reader of the *Vita nuova* who is not a follower of Love, or who is unable to understand the poem, is therefore denied the chance to use his or her reason in order to gain understanding. This reader is ultimately unable to position him or herself in relation to the poem, in relation to the model readers that the narrator proposes, and is thus alienated from any reading of the book. In chapters twelve and fourteen, then, the narrator proposes that reading is not for everyone; some readers (unskilled readers, belligerent readers) will never understand.

The narrator returns to the possibility of misunderstanding in chapter nineteen. After the canzone *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*, he expresses his intention to divide the poem more carefully than others "acciò che sia meglio intesa" (XIX, 15). The narrator himself, however, seems to doubt that this can be accomplished. When listing the attributes of his beloved, he comes eventually to her mouth: "dico de la bocca, la quale è fine

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<sup>17</sup>Singleton, *An Essay on the Vita nuova*, 47.

d'amore. E acciò che quinci si lievi ogni vizioso pensiero, ricordisi chi ci legge, che di sopra è scritto che lo saluto di questa donna, lo quale era de le operazioni de la bocca sua, fue fine de li miei desiderii mentre ch'io lo potei ricevere" (XIX, 20). It is as if the narrator thinks that through his exegesis the reader has somehow gotten the wrong idea about the poet's intentions. Why does the narrator choose this moment to talk about any "vizioso pensiero" that a reader may or may not have? It is as though the thought suddenly occurs to him that his words may be misunderstood and he is trying to anticipate any inappropriate thoughts his readers may have.

Despite this, the narrator insists that he could have made even more extensive divisions:

Dico bene che, a più aprire lo intendimento di questa canzone, si converrebbe usare di più minute divisioni; ma tuttavia chi non è di tanto ingegno che per queste che sono fatte la possa intendere, a me non dispiace se la mi lascia stare, ché certo io temo d'avere a troppi comunicato lo suo intendimento pur per queste divisioni che fatte sono, s'elli avvenisse che molti le potessero audire. (XIX, 22)

He is insisting that his exegesis is so powerful that it is sure to work; even those who should not be able to understand the poetry are able to understand it by virtue of the exegesis. He furthermore proposes that the smaller the divisions, the clearer the meaning, suggesting that if he were to continue in his explanation, the meaning would become clear to everyone. This contrasts sharply both with his prior insistence that it is sometimes impossible to open the meaning of a poem and with his fear of being misunderstood.

In chapter twenty-five, the narrator suggests a reader quite different from the one who was encouraged to "lasciare stare" (XIX, 22) poetry that he or she did not understand. This reader is "degnà da dichiararle onne dubitazione" (XXV, 1). He proposes that this reader might be confused by the fact that the poet speaks "d'Amore come se fosse una cosa per sé, e non solamente sustanzia intelligente, ma sì come fosse sustanzia corporale" (XXV, 1). He then proposes to clear up this matter, "secondo che è buono a presente" (XXV, 3). He explains that "Amore non è per sé sì come sustanzia, ma è uno accidente in sustanzia" (XXV, 1), although it is true that the poet speaks of him as though he had a body. He justifies himself by saying that he is using only the poetic license that is suitable for him, and since greater license is given to writers of poetry than to writers of prose in Latin, the same thing should be granted to writers of poetry in Italian. Thus, "se alcuna figura o colore rettorico è conceduto a li poete, conceduto è a li rimatori" (XXV, 7). This poetic license is not to be abused, however: "degno è lo

dicatore per rima di fare lo somigliante, ma non senza ragione alcuna, ma con ragione la quale poi sia possibile d'aprire per prosa" (XXV, 8).

Here, the narrator suggests that there is meaning within the poem that is decorated by rhetorical figures. This meaning can be subsequently revealed by prose. Thus, the narrator proposes a schism between the functions and the purposes of poetry and prose: poetry hides or obscures meaning, prose reveals it. He warns potential writers a second time that there must be a purpose for using rhetorical devices:

E acciò che non ne pigli alcuna baldanza persona grossa, dico che né li poete parlavano così senza ragione, né quelli che rimano deono parlare così non avendo alcuno ragionamento in loro di quello che dicono; però che grande vergogna sarebbe a colui che rimasse cose sotto vesta di figura o di colore rettorico, e poscia, domandato, non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotale vesta, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento. (XXV, 10)

In this passage the narrator agains refers to true meaning hidden under rhetorical devices and insists that the poet be able to reveal that meaning, by means of prose, upon demand. He has already, however, shown his own inability to do this in chapter fourteen, where he admits that the reader's confusion is sometimes "impossibile a solve." I believe that the prose section of chapter twenty-five must be read with this in mind. It then becomes an ironic suggestion that it is not always possible (or even desirable) to remove the veil of rhetoric from poetry, that perhaps even the poet himself does not know what he will find there.<sup>18</sup>

After the death of Beatrice, the narrator further explores the relationship between poetry and prose by radically changing the way in which he positions the prose sections in relation to the poetry: "E acciò che questa canzone paia rimanere più vedova dopo lo suo fine, la dividerò primo che io la scriva; e cotale modo terrò da qui innanzi" (XXXI, 2). If the death of Beatrice allows the reader (and the protagonist) to understand certain things that had previously been obscure (for example, Love's mysterious words in Latin and the meaning of the number nine), it does not seem to allow for a deeper understanding of the poems. Prose following poetry served, at least in theory, to educate the reader, who had the opportunity

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<sup>18</sup>My conclusions here are different from those of Stillinger, who writes that the *divisioni* are tools "for imperfect readers [that] work to overcome dividedness. Likewise the narrative prose—sequential, circumstantial—is inferior to the relatively atemporal, relatively abstract lyrics, but its function is to serve them beneficially, to "aprire per prosa" (25.8) [open through prose] that which might remain inaccessible otherwise" Stillinger, *The Song of Troilus*, 83.

first to read the poem and then to reflect upon what it might mean. The reader could subsequently look to the prose for an explanation of any ideas that were not clear. When the prose exegesis precedes the poem, the reader does not have the chance to do any work. The reader knows what the narrator thinks about the poem before he or she even reads it.<sup>19</sup>

The way in which the anteriority of the prose section influences the reader's interpretation of the poem is illustrated in chapter thirty-three. The protagonist describes a poem written for a man believed to be Beatrice's brother:

E però anzi ch'io li dessi questo soprascritto sonetto, sì dissi due stanze d'una canzone, l'una per costui veracemente, e l'altra per me, avvenga che paia l'una e l'altra per una persona detta, a chi non guarda sottilmente, ma chi sottilmente le mira vede bene che diverse persone parlano, acciò che l'una non chiama sua donna costei, e l'altra sì, come appare manifestamente. Questa canzone e questo soprascritto sonetto li diedi, dicendo io lui che per lui solo fatto l'avea. (XXXIII, 2-3)

Because the reader already knows that two people are talking in the poem, he or she approaches the poem with knowledge superior to that of the person for whom it was written. Yet this approach also makes it more difficult for the reader to disagree with the narrator's interpretation of the poem. When the prose follows the poem, the reader has a chance to form his or her own ideas about the poem before proceeding to the prose section. The narrator's exegesis is then read against the ideas that the reader has already developed. When the prose precedes the poem, however, the reader reads the poem with the narrator's ideas in mind and thus has less room to draw different conclusions.

When the language in a poem and in its exegesis is very similar, the reader wonders what the efficacy is of having both. For example, the canzone *Donna pietosa e di novella etate*, presented in chapter twenty-three, echoes the language used in the preceding prose section. Much of the same information is relayed: "Di necessitate conviene che la gentilissima Beatrice alcuna volta si muoia" (XXIII, 3) in the prose section becomes "Ben converrà che la mia donna mora" (XXIII, 21) in the *canzone*. The friend who says, "Or non sai? la tua mirabile donna è partita di questo secolo?" (XXIII, 6) in the prose section asks "Che fai? non sai novella? / morta è la donna tua, ch'era sì bella" in the *canzone*. The question then becomes whether or not the poem can replace the prose, or vice versa.

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<sup>19</sup>My argument here is similar to that made by Steven Botterill in "Però che la divisione non si fa," 72.



The prose section that precedes the canzone in chapter twenty-three is written, as are most of the prose sections, in a historical register: the protagonist appears to relate events exactly as they happened. He continues in this purported veracity when he tells the story of his vision to the women assembled around him: “Io vi diroe quello ch’i’ hoe avuto.’ Allora, cominciandomi dal principio infino a la fine, dissi loro quello che veduto avea, tacendo lo nome di questa gentilissima” (XXIII, 15). Yet already in this historical account, posing as the truth told “from beginning to end,” there is a hint of censorship: the protagonist omits the name of his beloved. Although the act of poetic creation reshapes history and gives it a new form, it is not necessarily less truthful than its prose account. Prose and poetry are equally unreliable.

The inadequacy of his linguistic skills is what leads the protagonist to fall ultimately silent after receiving a vision: “Appresso questo sonetto apparve a me una mirabile visione, ne la quale io vidi cose che mi fecero proporre di non dire più di questa benedetta infino a tanto che io potesse più degnamente trattare di lei” (XLII, 1). This project is deferred to some unspecified future date: “Sì che, se piacere sarà di colui a cui tutte le cose vivono, che la mia vita duri per alquanti anni, io spero di dicer di lei quello che mai non fue detto d’alcuna” (XLII, 2). This is the last of a number of deferrals in the *libello*. The narrator has for the moment given up in his attempt to control language. The reader, rather than learning interpretive skills, has learned instead of his own hermeneutic shortcomings. As Harrison writes, “what does the ‘story’ dramatize if not a series of corrections and revisions in the poet’s search for an adequate idiom?” The narrator and the protagonist, who throughout the text tried to show themselves masters of language but were ultimately unable to find this idiom,<sup>20</sup> become the final model for the reader. The narrator-protagonist, now one, assures the reader, “studio quanto posso” (XLII, 2) in the effort to create a new idiom (“quello che mai non fue detto”) that may prove more reliable, and the reader must do likewise in the struggle to create and understand meaning made with words.

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ENRICO MUSACCHIO

IL « PRINCIPIO, MEZZO E FINE » DEL POEMA EROICO:  
UN PROBLEMA DI POETICA CINQUECENTESCA

La *Poetica* di Aristotele chiaramente afferma che il poema epico, così come la tragedia

è mimesi d'una azione completa ed intera, che ha inoltre una certa grandezza. Si dà infatti anche un intero che non ha grandezza, ma intero è ciò che ha principio, mezzo, e fine. Principio è ciò che per se stesso non viene necessariamente dopo altro, mentre dopo di lui si dà naturalmente che sia o avvenga un'altra cosa. La fine, al contrario, è ciò che dopo un'altra cosa per sé stessa esiste di necessità o esiste usualmente, ma nient'altro c'è dopo. Il mezzo è ciò che viene dopo altro, ma un'altra cosa viene dopo di lui. Quindi bisogna che i racconti costruiti bene non comincino da un punto qualsiasi né finiscano dove che sia; si debbono invece conformare ai detti criteri<sup>1</sup>.

Trissino con una precisa citazione del testo aristotelico dichiarava nella "Lettera di dedica a Carlo V" (1547) di volere, nella composizione del suo poema eroico *L'Italia liberata da Gotthi*, adeguarsi alle parole del trattato greco. La sua *Italia* iniziava pertanto con il racconto dei primi eventi della storia e terminava con il racconto di quelli conclusivi; « [tra] le virtuosissime et eccellentissime azioni di Giustiniano Imperadore ... di tante ... n'lessi una e non più ... cominciandola ... da la causa et origine di essa guerra e terminandola ne la fine.<sup>2</sup> »

Trissino, in tal modo, implicitamente criticava un'altra maniera di organizzare una narrazione e cioè quella che, sconvolgendo l'ordine cronologico, inizia non dai primi eventi, ma da un evento nel bel mezzo della loro successione (*in medias res*, secondo l'espressione oraziana)<sup>3</sup> e solo in

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotele, *Poetica*, cap. VII (1450b20). Per il testo si veda: Aristotle, *Poetics*, a cura di Donald William Lucas; la traduzione impiegata qui è da: Aristotele, *Dell'arte poetica*, a cura di Carlo Gallavotti.

<sup>2</sup>Trissino, "Lettera di dedica a Carlo V" (IIb-IIIa).

<sup>3</sup>Orazio, *Ars poetica*, v. 148. E Orazio come esempio di un modo sbagliato di condurre una narrazione epica dà l'esempio di un racconto della guerra troiana che cominciasse dal primissimo evento, l'uovo di Leda (« nec orditur ab ovo », *Ars poetica*, v. 147).

seguito ritornando indietro racconta quanto è avvenuto in precedenza. Questo era il modo preferito dagli ammiratori di Virgilio, come Marco Girolamo Vida, che si volevano adeguare al modello dell'*Eneide* la quale inizia infatti con la narrazione degli eventi occorsi a Enea dopo la partenza dalla Sicilia, mentre gli eventi precedenti, la caduta di Troia e la prima parte del viaggio fino in Sicilia, verranno narrati successivamente con il racconto fatto per bocca di Enea a Didone<sup>4</sup>. Virgilio inizia dunque il racconto *in medias res* e non «da la causa et origine» come invece, secondo Trissino, avviene nel poema di Omero, e come, sempre secondo lui, la narrazione epica dovrebbe venir svolta<sup>5</sup>.

Si viene fissando dunque per opera dei teorici del poema eroico una contrapposizione tra *Iliade* e *Eneide*, e queste due opere diventano pertanto i poli di due diverse concezioni sul modo di ordinare la narrazione a proposito di quella che la critica contemporanea, nelle parole di Genette, chiama la «*opposition entre temps de l'histoire et temps du récit*»<sup>6</sup>, e delle 'anacronie' che ne possono derivare, e che oggi ben conosciamo al cinema attraverso la tecnica così frequentemente impiegata del 'flash-back'. In questo modo i due poemi classici servivano da esempio per le opposte concezioni, quella che vuole che il racconto segua la successione cronologica degli eventi (*Iliade*) e quella invece che privilegia l'inizio *in medias res* con 'flash-back' sugli eventi precedenti (*Eneide*).

Senonché i due poemi classici, entrambi grandemente ammirati, potevano poi essere piegati a dimostrare la tesi opposta. Infatti se si sostiene che l'*Iliade* intenda narrare l'ira d'Achille, la narrazione procede senza anacronie e parallelamente agli eventi (come Trissino aveva affermato e Castelvetro ripeteva, riprendendone l'argomentazione)<sup>7</sup>, se invece si ritiene che narri la guerra di Troia, la narrazione comincia *in medias res* con l'ira

<sup>4</sup>Vida infatti così organizza il racconto nella sua *Cristiade*. E già nel suo vasto trattato di arte poetica del 1527, con un ovvio riferimento ad Orazio, aveva consigliato di non iniziare la narrazione della caduta di Troia con il giudizio di Paride (*De arte poetica*, II, 74-76). Per la polemica di Trissino contro Vida si veda E. Musacchio, «Il poema epico ad una svolta: Trissino tra modello omerico e modello virgiliano».

<sup>5</sup>Trissino, "Lettera di dedica a Carlo V" (IIb-IIIa).

<sup>6</sup>Si veda la penetrante analisi di Gérard Genette, esemplificata a partire dal testo proustiano, nel capitolo *Ordre*, in *Discours du récit*.

<sup>7</sup>Ludovico Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta*: «non dobbiamo credere che Omero volesse raccontare tutta la guerra di Troia, né che abbia tramutato l'ordine del narrare naturale ... ma che egli non si propose di cantare cosa niuna della guerra troiana, ma solamente l'ira d'Achille» (87a).



d'Achille al nono anno e in seguito con brevi accenni racconta gli eventi che la hanno preceduta (come ritiene Vida)<sup>8</sup>. Mentre poi, per quanto riguarda l'*Eneide* che dovrebbe essere l'esempio per eccellenza del racconto anacronico (Giraldi)<sup>9</sup>, è stato sostenuto (da Castelvetro) che il poema di Virgilio procede senza anacronie: il racconto di Enea a Didone non sarebbe, secondo tale interpretazione, un 'flash-back', un ritorno indietro a eventi anteriori, ma è un discorso fatto da Enea, e che viene riportato, nella narrazione, al punto esatto nell'ordine temporale nel quale ha avuto luogo, cioè dopo l'arrivo a Cartagine dalla Sicilia<sup>10</sup>.

Ma se i due poemi potevano ugualmente servire tanto per una dimostrazione quanto per quella radicalmente opposta, la posizione divergente tra i fautori delle due tecniche narrative è ben reale, e occuperà tutto il resto del Cinquecento e oltre. Castelvetro, nella *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta* del 1570, chiaramente caratterizzava due maniere di organizzare un racconto:

Ora è stata opinione degli antichi et de moderni et spezialmente d'Orazio et di Ridolfo Agricola, la quale per aventura ha avuta in certo modo origine dalle predette parole di Aristotele, che l'ordine della narrazione poetica sia molto differente dall'ordine della narrazione storica, perciocché in questa si conserva l'ordine della natura et si comincia narrando dal principio delle cose che prima sono state fatte, et poi passando per lo mezzo si segue infino al fine, et in quella non si conserva simile ordine di natura ma se ne tiene uno artificiale che è di cominciare dal mezzo o dal fine et poi per alcune opportunità o digressioni di raccontare le cose prima avvenute o poi o in mezzo<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup>Vida cita con approvazione l'organizzazione del materiale nell'*Iliade* in cui per captare l'attenzione del lettore nel lungo racconto della caduta di Troia si comincia con il racconto dell'ira di Achille (« graves iras de virgine rapta aversi Aeacidæ praemittere » II,79-80) e solo in seguito si narrano gli eventi precedenti (« haud tamen interea quæ præcessere silendum » II, 83).

<sup>9</sup>« Poco lodevolmente compone colui che ... comincia l'opera dal principio ... Et però ... par che sia meglio cominciare dal mezzo et fare poi che l'altre parti siano introdotte nel processo dell'opera ... cosa che maravigliosamente fe' Virgilio nella sua Eneide, che ... diede principio al suo poema dalla partenza che egli fe' di Sicilia. Et fe' poi che egli contò a Didone quello che gli era avvenuto nella ruina di Troia », Giovambattista Giraldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei romanzi*, 50.

<sup>10</sup>Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta*: « nell'Eneida si racconta non la venuta di Enea da Troia in Italia, ma la venuta d'Enea di Sicilia in Italia senza allontanarsi punto dall'ordine storico servando il principio, il mezzo e 'l fine ne suoi naturali termini » (88a).

<sup>11</sup>Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta* (88b). Di Rodolfo Agricola,

E questa opposizione veniva poi, sempre secondo Castelvetro, erroneamente impiegata per definire un racconto 'poetico' in opposizione a un racconto 'storico':

Et questa opinione dell'ordine tramutato col quale il poeta debba raccontar le cose è così fissa nelle menti degli uomini et v'ha messe sì altamente le radici che Giacompo Pelatiere maestro di questa arte del tutto da non isprezzare vuole che Lucano non per altra cagione sia da rimuovere dalla schiera de poeti et da contare tra i favellatori se non perché in raccontare la guerra Farsalica non tramuta l'ordine naturale<sup>12</sup>.

In effetti Jacques Peletier, che nel 1541 aveva pubblicato la prima traduzione francese della *Ars Poetica* oraziana, nel suo trattato *Art Poétique*, del 1555, relega Lucano fra gli oratori e non fra i poeti perché la storia, al contrario del racconto letterario, « la faut suivre de droit fil et même la commencer par le premier bout: qui est contre la dignité du Poème »; e aggiunge: « nous savons qu'Homère a commencé son Iliade au neuvième an de la guerre de Troie: et Virgile son Enéide, au septième des erreurs d'Enée<sup>13</sup> », cioè a dire, entrambi questi poeti hanno cominciato *in medias res*, e non come Lucano da quelli che sono cronologicamente i primi avvenimenti. In conformità con tale criterio, Peletier giudicava che Lucano dovesse essere radiato dal novero dei poeti, i quali appunto sono tenuti a cominciare il loro racconto, così come è consigliato da Orazio, ad avvenimenti inoltrati, per ritornare solo in seguito a quelli dell'inizio.

Questa opinione di Peletier veniva denunciata da Castelvetro perché:

costoro adunque vogliono che la favola poetica sia intera et tutta ma che l'ordine delle parti riempienti il tutto che sono principio, mezzo et fine sia turbato et trasmutato, et in ciò sia differente da l'istorico che è ordinato et naturale. La qual cosa a me non pare dire Aristotele ancora che conceda che per via di digressioni si possano toccare delle cose del principio et del fine quando la cosa fosse troppo lunga se si prendesse tutta non essendosene presa se non una parte.

E Castelvetro concludeva che necessariamente vi è identità tra la successione cronologica degli eventi e l'ordine del loro racconto:

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in *De inventione dialectica*, del 1515, sono le espressioni « ordine naturale » e « ordine artificiale ». Si veda la citazione in B. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. I, 40.

<sup>12</sup>Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta*, 88b.

<sup>13</sup>Peletier, *Art poétique* (1555), 250.

Ora non possiamo credere che sia differenza tra l'ordine di narrare storicamente e l'ordine di narrare poeticamente, perciò che se la poesia, come cosa rappresentante, come è stato detto, riguarda nell'istoria come in cosa rappresentata, per qual ragione dee essere differente da lei nell'ordine?<sup>14</sup>

Ma Jacques Peletier, contro il quale Castelvetro insorgeva, non era un caso isolato. Di fronte alle eccezioni di Trissino e Castelvetro, i fautori dell'inizio di un poema *in medias res*, secondo il modello virgiliano e conformemente al suggerimento oraziano, sono la stragrande maggioranza e percorrono tutto il secolo. Uno dei primi trattatisti sistematici di teoria letteraria del Rinascimento, Bernardino Daniello, già nella sua *Poetica* del 1536, aveva distinto la « disposizione naturale », in cui « 'l poeta dal principio della cosa ch'egli vuol trattare incomincia ad ordire il suo poema e segue ordinatamente dal principio sino al fine », e la disposizione « artificiale » in cui « egli non dal principio, ma nel bel mezzo della cosa suol incominciare a narrare »; e giudicava che la prima è propria dello storico mentre la seconda invece è propria del poeta. E negli ultimi anni del Cinquecento, Tommaso Campanella giudica, nella sua *Poetica* italiana del 1596 che il poeta « come nella pittura non si cominciano a dipingere i capelli nel principio ... ma dalla faccia ... così li poeti da un certo mezzo dell'azioni ... devono il poema cominciare;<sup>15</sup> » per reiterare le sue posizioni nella matura *Poetica* latina pubblicata nel 1638, dove insiste che, sebbene la narrazione debba comprendere tutto lo svolgimento del poema, principio, mezzo e fine, l'inizio non coincide con l'ordine dei fatti (« Principium non erit iuxta historiae seriem »<sup>16</sup>) facendo osservare che così appunto insegna Virgilio, il quale inizia col naufragio di Enea. E tra Daniello e Campanella tutto un nutrito gruppo di trattatisti e poeti, convinti che il racconto non deve attardarsi a seguire una disposizione cronologica dei fatti, col rischio di tediare l'ascoltatore, ma deve al contrario, così come dice Orazio, rapire l'ascoltatore e metterlo immediatamente proprio al centro della storia, quasi come se la narrazione stessa volesse precipitarsi alla propria conclusione («semper ad eventum festinat et in medias res non secus ac notas auditorem rapit»<sup>17</sup>).

Tuttavia questo era solo uno dei problemi suscitati dalla definizione

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<sup>14</sup>Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta*, 86b e 87a (si badi che la numerazione di queste pagine così come appare nella stampa è erronea).

<sup>15</sup>Campanella, *Poetica* (redazione italiana giovanile), 378.

<sup>16</sup>Campanella, *Poeticorum liber unus* (poetica latina), 1126.

<sup>17</sup>Orazio, *Ars poetica*, vv.148-149.

aristotelica. Oltre al quesito se l'inizio, il mezzo e la fine del racconto debbano essere disposti o no in quell'ordine, un altro problema si poneva, più fondamentale ancora, e al quale Trissino non sembra aver posto attenzione: se in primo luogo sia necessario che la favola abbia un inizio, abbia un mezzo e abbia una fine. Questione che Trissino aveva tralasciato o perché la risposta gli pareva così ovvia da non necessitare che la si formulasse o perché egli non intendeva sollevare a quel punto il problema dei 'romanzi'. Perché in effetti la questione cela un diretto riferimento alla legittimità letteraria dei 'romanzi', e in particolare ai due più illustri 'romanzi', quello di Boiardo e quello di Ariosto, il primo dei quali non ha una fine, mentre il secondo non ha un principio. Questo era un dato di fatto che né chi amava queste opere, né chi ne faceva poco conto, potevano negare.

A tutta prima la questione viene sollevata indirettamente e si rivolge all'adeguatezza o meno della 'proposizione' dell'*Orlando Furioso*, cioè della descrizione del contenuto dell'opera data dal poeta all'inizio. La 'proposizione' è uno degli elementi strutturali tradizionali del poema, e come tale fa parte del repertorio retorico che l'autore di un poema eroico deve esibire. Ora appunto è a questo proposito che si appuntano sul capolavoro dell'Ariosto le prime critiche esplicite che troviamo pubblicate. Esse vengono riferite da Pigna in una lettera indirizzata a Giraldi, con data 25 luglio 1548:

benché varie et molte siano le reprensioni [si tratta dei 'morditori' dell'Ariosto] ... a me pare però che tutte a questo s'indirizzino: ch'egli non abbi seguitato le vestigia degli antichi poeti. Imperciocché dicono che il titolo propone una cosa della quale manco si parla in tutto il libro che d'altro, et seguitano argomentando che gli altri scrittori fanno rispondere insieme il principio e il fine, ma che il suo cominciamento è diversissimo da quello che nell'ultimo si conchiude<sup>18</sup>.

A questa specifica critica, che Pigna afferma di aver colta dalla bocca dei letterati toscani durante un suo viaggio, Giraldi nella sua lettera di replica non dà alcuna risposta<sup>19</sup>. Ma parrebbe che negli anni seguenti, nel suo *Discorso* del 1554, al momento di trattare più estesamente della questione della 'proposizione'<sup>20</sup>, egli abbia riflettuto su questo problema anche se (in questa occasione come nella precedente) non dimostri la determi-

<sup>18</sup>Per queste lettere scambiate da Pigna e Giraldi (e la controversia che le circonda) si veda Giraldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei romanzi*. Le lettere si trovano nell'*Appendice II*; quella di Pigna è a pagina 224.

<sup>19</sup>Giraldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei romanzi* 224-229.

<sup>20</sup>Il *Discorso dei romanzi* di Giraldi dedica parecchie pagine alla discussione di questa questione. Si vedano 80 ss.

nazione di mettere compiutamente a fuoco la questione o addirittura anche semplicemente di essere pronto ad ammettere che i due *Orlandi* presentino la specifica caratteristica di mancare di fine e di principio. Giralaldi vi afferma che il *Furioso* ha una fine che non corrisponde all'inizio; ma che tuttavia ciò non deve essere ritenuto una mancanza: « ancora ch'egli cominci il suo componimento in Orlando et finisca in Ruggiero, non merita però la riprensione che gli danno alcuni.<sup>21</sup> » La questione non è affrontata da Giralaldi direttamente come un problema che aristotelicamente riguardi la 'favola' (il problema insomma dell'azione che deve essere 'intera') ma piuttosto come una deficienza di fronte alle aspettative del lettore, un problema essenzialmente di ineleganza. Ed è in quanto tale che egli ne offre la difesa: Ariosto « segue l'ordine che si ha proposto. Et così come fu l'ultimo Ruggiero nella proposizione, così, la sua vittoria ... conchiuse tutta l'opera lodevolmente.<sup>22</sup> » E il titolo del poema, che non corrisponde realmente al contenuto effettivo, verrà similmente giustificato da Giralaldi in quanto in generale si può semplicemente dare « il nome ... da quella persona o da quella azione che è di più considerazione in tutta l'opera<sup>23</sup> ».

Su tutte le riflessioni di Giralaldi plana l'idea, parcamente e timidamente impiegata, che l'applicazione dei criteri aristotelici sia inappropriata ai 'romanzi', che questo genere sia cosa ignota agli antichi e che dunque non possa essere giudicato alla stregua dei generi classici: « mi sono molte volte riso di alcuni c'hanno voluto chiamare gli scrittori dei romanzi sotto le leggi dell'arte dataci da Aristotile et da Orazio.<sup>24</sup> » Ed inoltre, impiegando un criterio più restrittivo o più tecnico, Giralaldi osserverà che le regole di Aristotele non riguardano queste composizioni ma solo le composizioni di una sola azione: « le leggi date da Aristotile non si stendono se non alle poesie che sono di una sola azione<sup>25</sup> », dunque non ai 'romanzi'.

Ma in effetti alla precisa accusa dei classicisti Giralaldi neppure nel *Discorso* fornisce un'adeguata risposta; e, forse perché egli non aveva una risposta critica da contrapporgli, il problema stesso non è posto con chiarezza, ma esaminato, e dunque marginalizzato, sotto il profilo degli elementi esteriori costitutivi del poema: il 'titolo' appropriato, la 'proposizione' adeguata. Mentre invece, come giustamente i classicisti continueranno a proclamarlo, l'unità d'azione, entro una poetica che si voglia ari-

<sup>21</sup>Giralaldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei romanzi*, 56.

<sup>22</sup>Giralaldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei romanzi*, 56-57.

<sup>23</sup>Giralaldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei romanzi*, 42.

<sup>24</sup>Giralaldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei romanzi*, 79.

<sup>25</sup>Giralaldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei romanzi*, 54-55.



stotelica, lungi dall'essere semplicemente uno fra i diversi elementi di una buona composizione, è la loro stessa ragione di essere.

In verità possiamo immaginare che Giraldi oltre al fatto di non possedere strumenti critici con cui potesse rispondere adeguatamente a quelle specifiche accuse dei detrattori dei 'romanzi', si trovava anche nella posizione delicata di non volersi esporre troppo apertamente con le proprie concezioni del poema epico, dato che stava proprio allora mettendo in cantiere il proprio *Hercole* che egli voleva consono al nuovo gusto classicista, ma che, per il fatto di raccontare tutta la vita dell'eroe greco, non poteva necessariamente essere un poema di un'azione, ma di molte. È impensabile tuttavia che egli non vedesse come l'*Innamorato* e il *Furioso* peccassero chiaramente contro la tesi aristotelica di una singola azione, intera e cioè avente inizio, mezzo e fine.

In un interessante scambio di lettere degli anni 1556-1557 tra Giraldi, che a quest'epoca era ormai attivamente occupato nella composizione del suo *Hercole*, e Bernardo Tasso che metteva allora fine al suo *Amadigi*, la questione dello « inizio, mezzo e fine » del poema viene ripresa<sup>26</sup>. Giraldi, pur appartenendo al partito dei riformatori classicisti che proclamavano il dovere di modellare il nuovo poema secondo le linee direttive di Aristotele, aveva delle grandi riserve sui risultati ottenuti da Trissino, il quale (come si è visto) intendeva adeguarsi per la composizione della sua *Italia liberata dai Gotthi* ai criteri più severi del classicismo, e anzi addirittura in contrapposizione alla deviazione virgiliana e tanto più al genere popolare dei 'romanzi'. Bernardo Tasso invece, pur fingendo di partecipare al dibattito con animo aperto, era pienamente e senza riserve nella linea tradizionale degli autori di 'romanzi'<sup>27</sup>. Anche in questo caso la questione non viene affrontata direttamente da Giraldi ma indirettamente come il problema

<sup>26</sup>Leggibile nella bellissima edizione di Susanna Villari di Giovambattista Giraldi Cinzio, *Carteggio*.

<sup>27</sup>Complimentando Giraldi per aver difeso « la gloria del divinissimo nostro Ariosto, ricoperta d'alcuna nube di biasimo e di riprensione » (riferimento ai 'morditori' toscani), Bernardo Tasso scriveva: « era di mestieri ch'un raggio ... sgombrasse la nebbia di que' giudicii, i quali, non distinguendo la qualità de' poemi, lo riprendevano come poeta epico e non osservatore de le leggi sue, de la qual riprensione certo sarebbe stato degno, se la diversità del poema e l'intenzione del poeta non l'avesse iscusato »; e continua dicendo che, poiché Ariosto non si proponeva di seguire Omero o Virgilio « sperando per avventura più per questo sentiero [quello dei rapsodi] che per lo loro caminando di poter il mondo dilettere ... con molta prudenzia e molto giudicio abbia tessuta l'opera sua » (dal medesimo *Carteggio*, 270-71).

dell'approprietezza del 'titolo' e della 'proposizione'. A Bernardo Tasso Giraldi confessa di trovare il titolo del *Furioso* inappropriato<sup>28</sup>. E Bernardo Tasso replica che « il titolo non fu per altro fine ritrovato che per far avveduti i lettori di quello che ne l'opera si contiene.<sup>29</sup> » Lo spostamento della questione verso i valori retorici è osservabile anche qui, sebbene in questo caso si debba tener conto del fatto che Giraldi si rivolgeva ad un autore come Bernardo Tasso e dunque a persona che sapeva essere tutt'altro che ostile alle particolarità del genere del 'romanzo'. Ed è probabilmente per questa ragione che al momento di affrontare più da vicino la questione Giraldi invece di dare una precisa ragione rinvia Bernardo Tasso a quanto già ne ha scritto nel suo precedente *Discorso*, dunque ad una risposta al problema già precedentemente aggirato più che risolto<sup>30</sup>.

Pigna nella lettera del 1548, attraverso la voce dei « morditori » dell'Ariosto, aveva menzionato l'accusa di discrepanza tra inizio e fine del *Furioso*, critica alla quale, come si è visto, Giraldi non aveva direttamente risposto ma a cui successivamente aveva rivolta l'attenzione pur senza darne una soluzione chiara. Al proprio quesito è pertanto naturale che si rivolgesse Pigna stesso nel suo trattato del 1554, *I romanzi*, con una propria spiegazione e difesa mirante, quanto quella contemporanea di Giraldi, a stabilire la legittimità della specifica estetica di quel genere letterario che oltre tutto era una particolare gloria letteraria di Ferrara. Pigna spiega che Ariosto, essendo entrato al servizio del Cardinale d'Este, « tutta la casa di lui insiememente celebrar volea » e dunque aveva assunto Ruggero « come suo scopo ». E Pigna si pone dunque il quesito: « se di questo guerriero fa principalmente disegno di trattare, perché da Orlando piglia l'iscrizione et la proposizione dell'opera? » La risposta che ne offre è che sovente i poeti non danno titoli alle loro opere che corrispondano al soggetto, come per esempio la stessa *Iliade* la quale contrariamente a quanto il titolo annunzia non tratta della guerra di Troia ma dell'ira d'Achille. Orlando dunque è stato scelto (così continua la spiegazione di Pigna) non perché fosse il soggetto principale ma « perché dal più famoso et capo de' romanzi intitolar l'opera et prima proporla più era a proposito, ... sì per allettar gli animi di chi legge ». Ma Pigna si chiede inoltre: « Pare tuttavia strano che di Ruggero a dire s'abbia principalmente, et che da Rinaldo et da Ferraù si cominci, et che finalmente si lasci Orlando<sup>31</sup> ». Questo era il nodo princi-

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<sup>28</sup>Giraldi Cinzio, *Carteggio*, 287.

<sup>29</sup>Giraldi Cinzio, *Carteggio*, 292.

<sup>30</sup>Giraldi Cinzio, *Carteggio*, 313.

<sup>31</sup>Pigna, *I romanzi*, 76-77.

pale e fondamentale per i letterati aristotelizzanti toscani, coloro che egli aveva denominato i « morditori » dell'Ariosto. La risposta lascia perplessi. Pigna spiega che, come gli storici trattano di un periodo iniziando da dove un altro storico ha cessato di descrivere la successione degli eventi, così Ariosto ha iniziato da dove Boiardo aveva interrotto « in ciò i romanzi son come gli storici: perciocché ciascun di loro seguitando l'ordine de tempi, da quella parte pigliavano il principio infino alla quale un precedente scrittore fosse giunto<sup>32</sup> ». Al posto di quella che dovrebbe essere la giustificazione della presunta deviazione dalla regola poetica insomma Pigna ci offre la precisa caratterizzazione di questa stessa deviazione. Perché proprio in questi termini Aristotele definisce la sostanziale differenza tra poesia e storia nella frase che immediatamente segue quella su « principio, mezzo e fine » della favola:

le composizioni non debbono esser simili ai racconti storici; in questi non c'è da fare necessariamente l'esposizione di un'unica azione, bensì di un unico periodo, cioè i fatti che allora avvennero, relativi a una sola o più persone, ciascuno dei quali sta in relazione all'altro casualmente<sup>33</sup>.

Il contrasto tra soggetto storico e soggetto letterario non potrebbe essere più netto: il primo include le azioni che avvengono entro un determinato periodo, il secondo una singola azione completa in se stessa. E tuttavia un punto talmente essenziale per la poetica aristotelica viene menzionato a controsenso da Pigna proprio a proposito del poema ariostesco che intendeva difendere dai detrattori del grande poeta ferrarese.

Stupisce questo grosso equivoco in Pigna, anche se i termini del suo discorso critico che si vuole aristotelico, nella foresta di distinzioni e sottodistinzioni in cui si compiace, lasciano a volte perplessi, come quel parlare di 'scopo' del poema di Ariosto dove il discorso sembra volere che si parli di 'fabula'. Stupisce che Pigna si serva di un impianto così poco aristotelico dato che nel suo trattato afferma « quantunque d'Aristotile mai menzione fatto non abbia, non è stato però che di tutta la sua poetica servito non mi sia, tutta maneggiandola<sup>34</sup> ». Si vantava inoltre di aver tutto appreso appunto da Maggi, il grande commentatore della poetica aristote-

<sup>32</sup>Pigna, *I romanzi*, 78.

<sup>33</sup>Aristotele, *Poetica*, cap 23 (1459a21). Già Vida aveva colto questo punto essenziale, sottolineando la differenza tra il racconto poetico e il racconto storico e affermando che il poeta agirebbe sciocamente se narrasse con i criteri dell'annalista (« annales ceu congerat », *De arte poetica*, II, 74).

<sup>34</sup>Pigna, *I romanzi*, 65.

lica (« dieci anni suo continovo discepolo sono stato », « con lui solo son sempre conversato, da lui solo l'importanza delle lettere apparando »<sup>35</sup>). E invece, nel commentario alla poetica aristotelica completato da Vincenzo Maggi a partire da un lavoro comune con Bartolomeo Lombardi e pubblicato nel 1550, il *Aristotelis librum de poetica*, la netta contrapposizione aristotelica di composizione letteraria e racconto storico è perfettamente chiara. Le *Communes explanationes* di Lombardi e Maggi lo dichiarano senza possibile ambiguità: « Manifestum igitur est quod Epopoeia unam integramque actionem imitari debet ... et oportet imitationi per narrationem metro non similes historias esse consuetas, in quibus sane necessarium non est actionem unam exprimere, sed acta temporis unius<sup>36</sup> ». Il racconto epico sviluppa un'azione che deve essere unica e completa, al contrario del racconto storico che narra i diversi atti intervenuti entro un certo periodo di tempo. Pertanto il ricorso da parte di Pigna all'esempio della scrittura storica per spiegare l'incompletezza dei due *Orlandi*, invece di essere una giustificazione di quella pratica si rivela come un atto d'accusa. Nella prospettiva aristotelica Boiardo e Ariosto andrebbero pertanto eliminati dai ranghi poetici (così come, nella prospettiva oraziana, Lucano era stato eliminato da Peletier).

Maggi (che era un ammiratore di Ariosto e lo chiosava e lo insegnava<sup>37</sup>), per l'esemplificazione delle parole di Aristotele, si serve unicamente di autori classici e poteva dunque permettersi di tacere la deviazione dal canone aristotelico rappresentato dai due *Orlandi*. Giraldi, per parte sua, relegava il problema ad una questione marginale, Pigna con un'operazione maldestra li condannava tentando di giustificarli. Toccherà alla generazione successiva di teorici del poema eroico affrontare più apertamente il problema dell'evidente incompletezza dei poemi di Boiardo e Ariosto.

La condanna di Ariosto su questo specifico punto è esplicita nella *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta*, del 1570, di Castelvetro. Il commentatore chiarisce le differenze tra il fatto di avere « una certa grandezza » e il fatto di essere « intera o tutta », perché una favola può essere « intera ma breve » e dunque tale da non consentire una tragedia « per difetto della debita grandezza ». Più importante è tuttavia che sia intera; e, per Castelvetro, la *Poetica* aristotelica ha chiarito il concetto di 'tutto': « perché la prima cosa richiesta è il tutto, [Aristotele] dice che cosa sia il tutto cioè che è quello che ha principio et mezzo et fine. » Ma Castelvetro precisa che ci

<sup>35</sup>Pigna, *I romanzi*, 86.

<sup>36</sup>Lombardi-Maggi, *Aristotelis librum de poetica*, 148.

<sup>37</sup>Questa interessante informazione è data da Pigna nei *Romanzi*, 86.

può essere un tutto che non ha principio, mezzo e fine, come per esempio il cerchio, mentre invece il 'tutto' richiesto dalla favola deve specificatamente avere principio, mezzo e fine uniti da un legame di necessità e non semplicemente casualmente: « La favola adunque dee avere il principio non dipendente di necessità da altra azione ». E conclude dunque: « Et perché il principio dell'Orlando Furioso di Lodovico Ariosto dipende di necessità dallo 'namoramento del Conte Matteo Maria Boiardo, né senza averne piena notizia si può intendere, seguita che quel libro abbia ancora questo difetto che non ha principio lodevole<sup>38</sup> ». Con Castelvetro dunque la condanna dei due *Orlandi* è inequivocabile e solidamente fondata su una lucida interpretazione del testo aristotelico<sup>39</sup>.

Alla medesima conclusione di Castelvetro sembra giungere Torquato Tasso, nei *Discorsi del poema eroico* del 1594, che senza nominar Aristotele ne parafrasa il brano sull'unità d'azione:

Tutta o intiera dee esser la favola, perché in lei la perfezione si ricerca; ma perfetta non può esser quella cosa ch'intiera non sia. La perfezione e l'integrità si troverà nella favola s'ella avrà il principio, il mezzo e l'ultimo. Principio è quello che necessariamente non è dopo altra cosa, e l'altre cose son dopo lui. Il fine è quello che è dopo l'altre cose, né altra cosa ha dopo sé. Il mezzo è posto fra l'uno e l'altro, ed egli è dopo alcune cose, e alcune n'ha dopo sé<sup>40</sup>.

E continua:

<sup>38</sup>Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta*, 87a-88a. E già Minturno aveva osservato, nella sua *Arte poetica* del 1563, che « nell'Epica poesia ... la materia [è] intera e perfetta ... una e compiuta », e faceva notare che « l'Epica narratione non è già historia la qual narra non pur quante cose in un medesimo tempo si sono fatte, e quante ad uno overo a più sono avvenute ... ma cose di molti anni che con ordine l'una dopo l'altra ne vanno », 24-25.

<sup>39</sup>Ancor più radicale è la condanna di Giason Denores (nel suo *Discorso intorno a que' principii, cause et accrescimento che la comedia, la tragedia et il poema eroico ricevono*, del 1586) il quale, accusando Orazio di non aver ben letto Aristotele (« se avesse letto Orazio con maggior diligenza[la Poetica] », 397), affermava che Virgilio, tanto quanto Ariosto, aveva tralignato dalla regola della completezza dell'azione richiesta da Aristotele: « l'azion di Enea » non è « compita perciò che egli la finisce nella morte di Turno » (399), mentre « Dovea ... Virgilio finger che dopo la morte di Turno il padre dimandasse il suo corpo e gli desse la debita sepoltura » (400), e conclude pertanto che l'*Orlando Furioso* e l'*Eneide* « mancano da quella somma eccellenza ... che ci propone Aristotele e che dimostra solo Omero » (401).

<sup>40</sup>Tasso, *Discorsi del poema eroico*, 122.



dico che intiera è quella favola che in se stessa ogni cosa contiene ch'alla sua intelligenza sia necessaria, e le cagioni e l'origine di quella impresa che si prende a trattare vi sono espresse, e per li debiti mezzi si conduce ad un fine il quale niuna cosa lassi o non ben conclusa o ben risoluta<sup>41</sup>.

E quindi conclude senza ambiguità:

*l'Orlando innamorato* e *l'Furioso* non sono intieri, e sono difettosi nella cognizione di quel che loro appartiene: manca al *Furioso* il principio, manca all'*Innamorato* il fine; ma nell'uno non fu difetto d'arte, ma colpa di morte, nell'altro non ignoranza, ma elezione di finire ciò che dal primo fu cominciato. Che *l'Innamorato* sia imperfetto non vi fa mestieri prova alcuna; che non sia intiero il *Furioso* è parimenti manifesto, però che se noi vorremo che l'azione principale di quel poema sia l'amor di Ruggiero, vi manca il principio, se vorremo che sia la guerra di Carlo e d'Agramante, parimenti il principio è desiderato; perché quando e come fosse preso Ruggiero dall'amor di Bradamante non vi si legge, né meno quando o in che modo gli Africani movessero guerra a' Francesi, se non forse in uno o in due versi accennato; e molte volte i lettori nella cognizione di queste favole andarebbono al buio se dall'*Innamorato* non togliessero ciò ch'alla lor cognizione è necessario<sup>42</sup>.

Ma, sebbene Tasso sembri accordarsi perfettamente con le idee di Castelvetro, in realtà il principio aristotelico viene da lui svisgorito. Le pecche dei due *Orlandi* sarebbero scusabili in quanto inevitabili (la morte di Boiardo) o addirittura encomiabili umanamente (la volontà di Ariosto di continuare l'opera del predecessore); la ricerca di una scusante per i due autori conferma tuttavia l'esistenza del reato estetico. Peraltro Tasso (che pure costruisce la sua *Gerusalemme liberata* solidamente secondo i criteri dell'unica azione aristotelica) sminuisce in effetti, nei due *Orlandi*, l'importanza della necessità proclamata da Aristotele di una sequenza che sia intera, e cioè che abbia un inizio, un mezzo e una fine. Questa necessità, che è estetica per Aristotele (come Castelvetro aveva chiarito), per Tasso si riduce alla questione pratica se il lettore sia sufficientemente provvisto di informazioni da poter seguire gli eventi<sup>43</sup>. E, come per cercare una scappa-

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<sup>41</sup>Tasso, *Discorsi del poema eroico*, 122.

<sup>42</sup>Tasso, *Discorsi del poema eroico*, 123.

<sup>43</sup>Il problema che preoccupa Tasso (« i lettori nella cognizione di queste favole andarebbono al buio ») naturalmente non poteva preoccupare Aristotele dato che comunque il pubblico greco già conosceva inizio, mezzo e fine dei miti che continuamente venivano ripresi nel loro repertorio (e dunque quelle storie non presentavano novità) per cui infondata sarebbe stata la preoccupazione di fornire

toia ai due autori che amava pur sapendo di dover condannare se voleva adeguarsi ad una poetica aristotelica, ricorre ad uno stratagemma ingegnoso ma disgraziatamente puramente verbale: i due *Orlandi* vanno considerati come un unico poema che dunque, se essi vengono fusi insieme, ha inizio, mezzo e fine (« si dee ... considerare l'*Orlando innamorato* e l'*Furioso* non come due libri distinti, ma come un poema solo, cominciato dall'uno e con le medesime fila, benché meglio annodate e meglio colorite, dall'altro poeta condotto al fine; e in questa maniera risguardandolo, sarà intiero poema, a cui nulla manchi per intelligenza delle sue favole »<sup>44</sup>). L'idea di dichiarare un poema ricomposto da due monconi come aristotelicamente intero, gli era forse venuta da una riflessione cara a Giraldi, il quale l'aveva a sua volta ricevuta dagli antichi commentatori dell'*Enaide*, secondo la quale dei dodici libri del poema virgiliano i primi sei riproducono l'*Odissea* e i sei ultimi l'*Iliade*<sup>45</sup>.

A queste concilianti conclusioni Tasso arrivava dopo che ormai era divampata la polemica che opponeva la *Gerusalemme liberata* al *Furioso*, e nella quale naturalmente la questione dell'unità d'azione era stata sbandierata pro e contro il poema dell'Ariosto.

In *Il Carrafa, o vero della epica poesia*, del 1584, Camillo Pellegrino metteva nella bocca di uno degli interlocutori del suo dialogo la lode della *Gerusalemme liberata*. Paragonata a questa, il poema dell'Ariosto e i vari « romanzi » erano giudicati « mostri ... di più capi e di diverse membra non ordinate », privi di « un solo principio che abbia il suo mezzo e il suo fine, si come ha l'ordinata imitazione poetica », mentre al contrario Tasso aveva « ordito il suo epico poema con le vere regole insegnateci da Aristotile et approvate da' poeti greci e latini ». Per cui Pellegrino concludeva che Tasso era « per questo solo ... più poeta che l'Ariosto non »<sup>46</sup>.

Replicando al giudizio espresso nel *Carrafa*, Francesco Patrizi (nel *Parere in difesa di Ludovico Ariosto*, del 1585) dichiarava in primo luogo di sentirsi « sciolto e fatto libero da tutti i legami dell'autorità o di Aristotile o

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i presupposti all'azione rappresentata in quel particolare caso. Insomma la necessità di completezza dell'azione in Aristotele non è in alcun modo ambigua, come invece negli esempi presi in considerazione da Tasso.

<sup>44</sup>Tasso, *Discorsi del poema eroico*, 123.

<sup>45</sup>Giraldi ne parla nel *Discorso dei romanzi* (si vedano pagina 50 e pagina 80 e le note relative in cui vengono indicate le fonti antiche a cui Giraldi attinge) e anche nelle lettere a Bernardo Tasso (*Carteggio*, 286). L'idea interessava Giraldi in connessione con la 'proposizione' e anche il 'titolo'.

<sup>46</sup>Pellegrino, *Il Carrafa, o vero della epica poesia*, 317.

d'altri, ove io vegga la ragione e la verità de' fatti più potere.» Ed esprimeva il proprio scetticismo davanti ad una rigida regolamentazione poetica; a suo giudizio « gli insegnamenti poetici di Aristotile » non erano « bastanti a costituire arte scienziiale di poetica. » « La disputa ... se in ogni eroico poema l'azione debba esser una, come dicono comandare Aristotile, o più azioni v'abbian luogo » pareva a Patrizi senza interesse; in effetti nell'*Iliade*, l'ira di Achille non era che uno fra molti episodi, mentre poi era possibile sostenere che una fosse l'azione nel *Furioso*, e cioè l'amore di Ruggiero e Bradamante entro la guerra di Carlo Imperatore<sup>47</sup>.

Alla replica del Patrizi rispondeva irritato Torquato Tasso, nel suo *Discorso sopra il parere fatto dal signor Francesco Patricio in difesa di Ludovico Ariosto*, del 1585. Anche Tasso iniziava il suo scritto con una dichiarazione di fede filosofica; « non ho mai lodato alcuno de' filosofi che biasimi Aristotile ma quelli solamente che congiungono l'opinione Platonica e l'Aristotelica. » Contro l'approccio pragmatico di Patrizi affermava dunque il proprio aristotelismo ad oltranza: « i principi d'Aristotile son propri e veri e bastanti ad insegnarci l'arte della poesia.<sup>48</sup> » In opposizione al lassismo di Patrizi, Tasso affermava pertanto che l'azione deve essere unica e conclusa, col pericolo altrimenti che congiungendo « insieme molte azioni » si finisca per « moltiplicare senza fine, laonde non ci sarebbe certo termine.<sup>49</sup> »

Ritornando sui termini della sua discussione con Tasso, Patrizi nel *Trimerone* del 1586 si mostrava conciliante: « Quanto alla ragione prima dell'un'azione, sopra la quale il Sig. Tasso molto si distende, volendo che l'azioni di un poema siano finite e terminate, e per conseguente il poema non dovere essere infinito, come altri pare che voglia, io vi rispondo che

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<sup>47</sup>Patrizi, *Parere in difesa di Ludovico Ariosto*, 161. Per la datazione di questo e dei successivi interventi nella controversia mi attengo alle proposte di B. Weinberg in *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, il cui trattamento della questione è fondamentale. Per un accurato esame delle critiche ad Ariosto nella seconda metà del Cinquecento si veda Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic* (soprattutto i capitoli 5, 6 e 7).

<sup>48</sup>Tasso, *Discorso sopra il parere fatto dal signor Francesco Patricio in difesa di Ludovico Ariosto*, 180.

<sup>49</sup>Tasso, *Discorso sopra il parere fatto dal signor Francesco Patricio in difesa di Ludovico Ariosto*, 186. Nel *Giudizio sovra la sua Gerusalemme*, di data incerta, Tasso precisava che l'*Iliade* includeva « una intera attione d'Achille adirato; e quest'attione ha il principio, il mezzo et il fine. Il principio è lo sdegno nato per l'amore di Briseide toltagli ingiustamente da Agamennone, e 'l fine la pace fatta tra loro », 87.

niuno di quelle cose aveva io detto.<sup>50</sup> » Poemi finiti o non finiti («come altri pare che voglia»), Patrizi sembrava mirare in questo scritto a placare l'amico di cui ammirava il poema, anche a costo di mettere la sordina ai propri convincimenti anti-aristotelici e al proprio scetticismo sulla necessità di completezza nel poema eroico<sup>51</sup>.

Ma contro le opinioni espresse nel *Carrafa* di Pellegrino era entrato in campo un pronipote dell'autore del *Furioso*, Orazio Ariosto che, nelle *Risposte d'Orazio Ariosto* ad alcuni luoghi del dialogo dell'epica poesia del signor Cammillo Pellegrino ne' quali si riprendeva l'*Orlando Furioso* dell'Ariosto, scritte lo stesso anno di pubblicazione del *Carrafa* (« stampato poco fa ») si dichiarava, come Patrizi, poco convinto delle tesi della *Poetica* aristotelica, opera « manca ed imperfetta. » Oltretutto il genere stesso dell'epica risultava a Orazio Ariosto equivoco in quanto composto di tipi diversi. E, poiché vi sono « altre maniere di unità » concludeva che « diverse specie di poesia possano aver diverse proprietà; » era pertanto concepibile « che tra quei che sono nominati poemi epici ve ne siano che partano da questa regola della stretta unità della favola; » alcuni e dunque non tutti. E Orazio Ariosto aggiungeva che, qualora si fosse voluto insistere sulla necessità dell'unità, si sarebbe potuto sostenere che nel *Furioso* la pazzia d'Orlando fosse la sola azione principale « come quella ch'è intera, e in quell'opera sola forse ha principio, mezzo e fine<sup>52</sup> ».

Anche contro Orazio Ariosto si scagliava Torquato Tasso, in *Delle differenze poetiche per risposta al Sig. Orazio Ariosto*, del 1587, obiettando che la *Poetica* aristotelica non era « manca ed imperfetta » come sostenuto da costui. Tasso ribadiva il proprio convincimento che le parole di Aristotile fossero il criterio supremo: « Aristotele dà per ammaestramento che l'azione debba esser una », e invece « Ariosto e gli altri moderni hanno ripieni i loro Poemi di varie favole. » Gli episodi secondari non erano tutti da eliminare, concedeva Tasso, ma le parti del poema «debbono essere legate in modo che alcuna non se ne possa sciogliere senza guastar tutta la catena<sup>53</sup> ».

Quanto a Campanella, egli, come Patrizi e a differenza del Tasso, si voleva libero da un rigido aristotelismo. Ma questo non gli impediva di accettare senza discussione la regola aristotelica dell'unicità e della com-

<sup>50</sup>Patrizi, *Trimerone*, 215.

<sup>51</sup>Si veda sulle circostanze storiche dell'amicizia fra Patrizi e Tasso il volume di Micaela Rinaldi, *Torquato Tasso e Francesco Patrizi*, che contiene un acuto esame delle divergenti posizioni filosofiche.

<sup>52</sup>Orazio, Ariosto *Risposte*, 232-233.

<sup>53</sup>Tasso, in *Delle differenze poetiche per risposta al Sig. Orazio Ariosto*, 253-254.

pletezza dell'azione, regola alla quale anzi dichiarava di uniformarsi nel suo giudizio già nella *Poetica giovanile*. Approvava il poema di Tasso che gli sembrava portare un titolo adeguato (« il Tasso facendo conquistare Gierusalem per principale intento cantata, fa ben dir Gierusalem liberata»), mentre criticava il Furioso il cui titolo non corrisponde al contenuto (« sono molto lontani il principio, mezzo e fine e gli episodi alla furia di Orlando »<sup>54</sup>). E condannava Ariosto: « benché sia ammirabile in tutte le sue parti del poema per la vaghezza delle favole ... nondimeno per aver disunita l'azione, non sapendo se egli dee cantare dell'impresie d'Orlando, della sua pazzia ... o li gesti di Ruggiero ... perde assai di riputazione e ... pare un copiatore di favole disunite »<sup>55</sup>. Campanella scorgeva una differenza tra « poema » e « istoria » non solo nella « forma » ma nella « materia » perché « l'istoria tratta una o diverse azioni del mondo ... senza unità », mentre il poeta « narra un'azione ... col suo principio, mezzo e fine poetico ordinato al gusto;<sup>56</sup> » ovviamente riferendosi al criterio aristotelico ma interpretato come un principio di ordine, una ricetta di buon gusto. Deficienti del richiesto ordine nella sistemazione del materiale o incapaci di offrire l'informazione necessaria alla comprensione dell'intreccio o (cosa ben più grave) decisamente manchevoli nel principio estetico (secondo la poetica aristotelica fondamentale per ogni opera narrativa) dell'unità d'azione, scusabili o no per ragioni personali o di tradizione o di ignoranza: i giudici dei *due Orlandi* sono in complesso unanimi nella denuncia.

Eppure l'assenza di un qualsiasi senso di disagio per queste presunte pecche nella composizione della 'fabula' da parte degli autori dell'*Innamorato* e del *Furioso* (e in generale negli autori di 'romanzi') avrebbe dovuto suscitare in quegli stessi giudici il dubbio che la mancanza di un inizio o di una fine, la non completezza insomma, non fosse un'imperfezione non intenzionale, bensì un ben concertato disegno di seguire un criterio diverso da quello che lo studio della poetica aristotelica permetteva di istituzionalizzare ma che era ovviamente presente nella lunga serie di opere narrative dall'antichità in avanti. Perché in effetti Aristotele non aveva inventato un criterio nuovo, ma semplicemente osservava una caratteristica delle opere drammatiche e narrative più riuscite della letteratura greca; e questa caratteristica era riscontrabile non solo nelle opere greche ma in quelle latine e in quelle italiane, le quali, tutte o quasi, seguono il criterio di presentare una favola che ha un inizio, un mezzo e una fine legati da un

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<sup>54</sup>Campanella, *Poetica* (redazione italiana giovanile, 1596), 382.

<sup>55</sup>Campanella, *Poetica*, 378.

<sup>56</sup>Campanella, *Poetica*, 323.



legame di necessità, sotto pena di risultare inconcludenti. Di questa così ben stabilita regola estetica Boiardo e Ariosto avevano esibito una sovrana noncuranza. E tuttavia la curiosità di esplorare le ragioni estetiche per cui i due maggiori autori di 'romanzi' avessero voluto deliberatamente dipartirsi, così radicalmente e ostentatamente, da quella che era stata la pratica letteraria tradizionale, solidamente stabilita e seguita nei racconti greci, latini e italiani, e che la Poetica aristotelica non faceva che esplicitare, non sembra aver sfiorato i critici, tanto quelli avversi al genere dei « romanzi » quanto quelli che li apprezzavano.

Con l'*Innamorato* e con il *Furioso* tuttavia si presentava, chiaramente e deliberatamente, l'anomalia di due racconti che erano monchi o dell'inizio o della fine, e che ciononostante non dovevano in alcun modo risultare inconcludenti agli innumerevoli lettori che non si stancavano di leggerli e rileggerli senza mai mostrare il minimo segno di esser insoddisfatti dalle palesi troncature di fine e di inizio<sup>57</sup>. E in effetti l'*Innamorato* non è interrotto dalla morte del suo autore, il quale invece ritiene, e lo dichiara (con una disinvoltura fenomenale), di poter piantare in asso la storia, proprio all'inizio di un nuovo straordinario episodio, l'impossibile amore di Fiordispina per Bradamante; non è stato interrotto neppure da avvenimenti politici (un'altra invasione 'straniera' dell'inesistente stato italiano) che metterebbero in crisi un Boiardo proto-risorgimentale. Non è interrotto, a propriamente parlare, ma volutamente troncato dal suo autore il quale giudica che sia venuto il momento di concludere, a metà degli avvenimenti, perché questa è la chiusura appropriata per questo genere di struttura narrativa: « Un'altra fiata, se mi sia concesso / Raccontarovi il tutto per espresso<sup>58</sup> ». E il *Furioso* la cui struttura è calcolata con esattezza matematica, quarantaquattro canti distribuiti simmetricamente intorno alla follia di Orlando che ne occupa il centro esatto, non ha alcuna difficoltà a iniziare

<sup>57</sup>Si veda Zsuzsanna Rozsnyoi, *Dopo Ariosto*, per un'analisi sociologica della popolarità del genere cavalleresco (le « esigenze di un pubblico culturalmente medio-basso », 17), e della « risposta del mercato librario » con una fioritura di « varie imitazioni e continuazioni di romanzi famosi » (18). Alberto Casadei descrive il declino del 'romanzo' come definitivo a partire già dal 1548 (si vedano le sue intelligenti osservazioni nella *Fine degli incanti*, soprattutto nella "Introduzione"), ma basterebbe l'esempio del poema di Brusantini a provare che ancora nella seconda metà del Cinquecento il vecchio, tradizionale romanzo esisteva ancora. Riguardo alla complessità del tessuto narrativo del *Furioso*, si vedano le interessanti osservazioni di Dennis Looney, *Compromising the Classics*, in particolare il capitolo III.

<sup>58</sup>Sono i due ultimi versi dell'*Orlando innamorato*, III, IX, 26.

da un non-inizio. E per il colmo dell'insolenza verso il tradizionale rispetto per la completezza del racconto, ad un certo punto della storia di uno dei personaggi centrali (Angelica, che scompare senza che si sappia dove vada a finire) l'autore si lascia andare a invocare un autore futuro che si preoccuperà forse di continuarne la storia:

Quanto, Signore, ad Angelica accada  
dopo ch'uscì di man del pazzo a tempo  
e come a ritornare in sua contrada  
trovasse e buon navilio e miglior tempo  
e de l'India a Medor desse lo scettro  
forse altri canterà con miglior plettro<sup>59</sup>.

Offerta che non è caduta su orecchie sorde per cui abbiamo delle continuazioni, l'*Angelica innamorata* di Brusantini, *Le lacrime di Angelica* dell'Aretino, e altri poemi su questo o su altri personaggi, in un'esplosione di nuovi intrecci diramanti dalla storia principale e che mostrano chiaramente che non vi era alcuna obiezione estetica da parte degli autori a che l'intreccio venisse allargato e allungato. Anzi Boiardo e Ariosto invitano esplicitamente a non tener conto della apparente (e secondo il loro desiderio solo temporanea) conclusione del racconto.

Questo diverso tipo di 'fabula', privo di una struttura architettonica esteriore (è il caso dell'*Innamorato*) o costruito con una struttura, per certi versi, rigida (come il *Furioso*) permetteva comunque l'aggregazione di altri pezzi del racconto da aggiungersi al principio, alla fine o nel mezzo; opere così complesse che, in effetti, nessun poeta o compagnia di poeti avrebbe mai potuto portarle a termine.

I teorici rinascimentali hanno saputo individuare la devianza dei due Orlandi, ma non l'enormità e la stranezza di questo progetto narrativo. Forse i più anti-aristotelici fra di loro, quelli con un grosso bagaglio platonico, come Campanella o Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, avevano gli strumenti per un'indagine del fenomeno che così radicalmente si dipartiva da una pratica accettata da sempre. Ma non sembrano tuttavia aver avuto l'immaginazione e neppure la curiosità di indagare questo vistoso scarto dalle regole tradizionali della narrativa, e scoprire le ragioni d'essere di un progetto estetico che ammetteva la possibile infinita estensibilità della 'fabula', la quale veniva dunque a essere concepita non come un semplice lavoro definitivamente concluso e circoscritto nel paesaggio letterario, ma piuttosto come un seme da cui potevano nascere altre creazioni; poemi conclusi e al tempo stesso aperti.

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<sup>59</sup>*Orlando furioso*, XXX,16.

Per questa ambigua caratteristica di essere una struttura completa in se stessa e al tempo stesso costituire una semplice parte di un'altra più ampia struttura, un poema di quel tipo può far pensare ai progetti artistici dei grandi romanzieri dell'800-'900, come la *Comédie humaine* di Balzac o i *Rougon-Macquart* di Zola o il progettato ciclo di Verga o *La Recherche du temps perdu* di Proust. Così come *Un amour de Swann* è completo in se stesso e indipendentemente fruibile, ma al tempo stesso è un membro necessario per l'insieme della *Recherche*, così pure il *Furioso* è stato concepito da Ariosto come completo e autonomo, ma anche indissolubilmente connesso con l'inizio della storia rappresentato dall'*Innamorato*. Ma la similarità termina qui, perché in quei cicli romanzeschi la struttura d'insieme è previamente concepita e le varie parti sono opera dello stesso autore, mentre nei nostri poemi si invitano altri sconosciuti autori futuri a contribuire altri imprevedibili allargamenti della storia. L'esplosione della favola operata dal 'romanzo' rinascimentale è potenzialmente infinitamente più vasta perché, potenzialmente, le aggiunte erano infinite e innumerevoli i nuovi possibili contributori. Non solo si ammette la collaborazione di autori diversi ad una stessa fabula, addirittura si prospetta la possibilità di una gemmazione all'interno di questa fabula di nuovi 'romanzi' per mano di « altri plettri ». Boiardo e Ariosto sono insomma ben più vistosamente esterni alle esigenze dell'unità d'azione codificata da Aristotele di quanto non lo siano i romanzieri ottoneviceseschi, e ben più radicalmente di quanto persino i critici rinascimentali sembrino voler suggerire. E il tentativo di Tasso, e di altri, di ricondurli entro il filone tradizionale si rivela chiaramente fallimentare.

Nel coro in fondo concorde di coloro che ritenevano Boiardo e Ariosto deficienti nella composizione dei loro poemi, nonché di coloro che si arrabattavano a trovare ragioni o quantomeno scuse per salvarli dalla condanna, Orazio Ariosto è isolato nel non credere nella necessità di un'azione completa e conclusa alla quale i due massimi autori di 'romanzi' non si sarebbero attenuti o non avrebbero saputo attenersi, a seconda che ascoltiamo le ragioni dei critici o dei difensori<sup>60</sup>. A differenza di questi ultimi Orazio Ariosto, nelle sue *Risposte*, affronta la questione di pieno petto, senza cercare scusanti per le anomalie strutturali delle due opere. È l'unità d'azione auspicabile in ogni opera letteraria? La conclusione è sorprendente. Con chiari riferimenti platonici (probabilmente Orazio Ariosto ha

<sup>60</sup>È ben vero che il dubbio che vi fosse stata una volontà di infrazione della regola dell'unità, e non semplicemente una inabilità a seguirla, si era già insinuato nel discorso di Pellegrino (« Ariosto volontariamente, non già per difetto d'ingegno l'abbia contro le regole di Aristotile tessuta », Il *Carrafa*, p. 321), ma senza che se ne esplorino veramente le ragioni (si suggerisce che egli « attese solamente alla vaghezza et al diletto, posponendo l'utile », *ibidem*, 318).

soprattutto presente il *Timeo*) il pronipote del grande Ludovico tesse l'elogio della struttura aperta dei due poemi:

se il poema d'una sola azione è più simile ad un animale, più simile al grandissimo animale ch'è 'l mondo sarà il poema di più azioni artificiosamente intrecciate insieme, perché come di cinque corpi semplici tutti egualmente principali quanto alla costituzione del tutto (sebben poi più o men nobili) è composto il mondo, così di più azioni, tutte egualmente principali, si può comporre un poema: anzi è stato composto dall'Ariosto, tra il quale e il Tasso peravventura non si può far comodamente paragone per determinar la superiorità dell'uno all'altro di questi due scrittori se prima non si determina con ragioni qual di questi due modi di poetare sia più laudabile<sup>61</sup>.

Il poema è dunque come un animale, e come un animale comporta organi diversi e necessari. Ma è inoltre una struttura vivente e dunque soggetta alla crescita. Con la sua metafora platonica Orazio Ariosto ha individuato il progetto indefinitamente accrescitivo auspicato da Boiardo e Ariosto, e in effetti lo esalta. Di fronte alla ben conclusa bellezza di opere concepite come quelle che la *Poetica* aristotelica prende in considerazione, Orazio Ariosto pone in luce un altro modo di strutturare un poema, il modo scelto da Boiardo e Ariosto, che egli cautamente suggerisce potrebbe essere in effetti « più laudabile » di quell'altro.

La voce di Orazio Ariosto è comunque isolata. L'affascinante metafora del poema come un animale, e l'implicita assimilazione dell'opera d'arte a tutto un universo (il mondo è un «grandissimo animale», il poema dunque è concepito come un piccolo mondo) non trovano echi nel dilagante aristotelismo che si è imposto nella teoria se non nei gusti letterari. Il fanatismo della fede in Aristotele che emana dalle parole di Tasso, ma forse ancor più la mancanza di acume nell'osservanza servile all'ortodossia dominante che osserviamo in Campanella, danno un chiaro segnale dello svigorimento del discorso sulla poetica all'alba del Seicento, soprattutto se messi a confronto con la lucidità con cui nei primi decenni del Cinquecento Trissino aveva saputo identificare alcuni punti chiave dell'auspicato nuovo poema eroico classicheggiante.

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<sup>61</sup>Orazio Ariosto *Risposte*, 236.

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ANNA L. MORO

FIORILLO'S LA GHIRLANDA AND OLD NEAPOLITAN:  
A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

Although the early Seicento holds a prominent position in the history of literature in Neapolitan, few works from that period have received adequate attention from linguists.<sup>1</sup> The past few decades have witnessed a renewed interest in the publication of modern editions of Neapolitan texts<sup>2</sup> and, in particular, a re-evaluation of that literature from a sociohistorical and sociocultural perspective.<sup>3</sup> Few studies, however, have focussed on a systematic linguistic analysis of the language of even the most prominent figures of the early Seicento in literature in Neapolitan, Basile and Cortese.<sup>4</sup> One figure who has received limited attention from those interested in Old Neapolitan is Silvio Fiorillo, a figure well known to commedia dell'arte scholars, most notably as an actor. Yet, there is reason to believe that Fiorillo's works, including *La ghirlanda*—almost certainly his first known work (see below)—merit attention from anyone interested in language in Naples in the early Seicento. *La ghirlanda* is a pastoral eclogue in Tuscan and Neapolitan that appears to have been first published in 1602

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<sup>1</sup>This article, as the title indicates, presents the preliminary research for a larger project, the main objective of which is a critical edition of *La ghirlanda*. The initial research for this project was made possible thanks to a grant from the Arts Research Board of McMaster University.

<sup>2</sup>See for example, the many critical editions published in the past several years in the series *Testi dialettali napoletani* directed by Enrico Malato and published in Rome by Benincasa.

<sup>3</sup>See for example, Bianchi, De Blasi and Librandi, *I' te vurria parlà*, pp. 81-116; Rak, "La tradizione letteraria" and *Napoli gentile*.

<sup>4</sup>Of course, many linguistic studies devoted to Old Neapolitan include observations on the language of seventeenth-century writers—for example, Bianchi, De Blasi and Librandi, *I' te vurria parlà*; De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato e scritto*; Sornicola, "L'oggetto"—but few investigations have focussed exclusively on the language of these writers. On the language of *Lo cunto de li cunti* see Vizmulder-Zocco, "Alcune considerazioni" and Moro, *Aspects of Old Neapolitan*; on the language of Cortese and Basile see Pasquarelli Clivio, *La formazione storica*, 204-239.

in Naples and to have been in circulation throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. If mentioned at all, this work is discussed very briefly by most *commedia dell'arte* scholars;<sup>5</sup> to date, the most exhaustive treatment of *La ghirlanda* is found in Rak's *Napoli gentile* (231-238), where a few pages are dedicated to an analysis of the prologue and certain cultural and literary aspects of the work. The objectives of this study are to contextualize Fiorillo and *La ghirlanda* in *commedia dell'arte* scholarship and in literature in Neapolitan in the early Seicento and to present preliminary observations on the work itself—its textual history and, in particular, the Neapolitan it contains.

### Fiorillo and *commedia dell'arte* scholarship

Most of what we know of Fiorillo comes to us from scholarship on the *commedia dell'arte*, since he is a prominent figure of the *commedia dell'arte* in the early seventeenth century. Fiorillo enjoyed considerable fame as an actor throughout Italy and France and worked with some of the most well known *commedia* troupes and actors of his era: Flaminio Scala and, in particular it appears, Pier Maria Cecchini and Tristano Martinelli.<sup>6</sup> As many scholars have noted, the first writer to comment explicitly on Fiorillo was, in fact, his contemporary Pier Maria Cecchini: in his *Frutti delle moderne commedie et avvisi a chi le recita* (1628), Cecchini speaks about Fiorillo in connection with the two masks with which Fiorillo has since been typically identified, Pulcinella and the Spanish Capitan Mattamoros. Cecchini claims that Fiorillo is the “inventor” of Pulcinella and that he is not to be surpassed in his portrayal of the Spanish *capitano*: “Inventor di questa stragofissima parte fu il Capitan Mattamores, huomo in altri comici rispetti di una isquisita bontà, posciaché per far il Capitano spagnuolo non ha avuto chi lo avanzi, e forse pochi, che lo agguagliino” (*Frutti*, 35).

At the very end of the seventeenth-century Andrea Perrucci, in his

<sup>5</sup>In *La commedia dell'arte*, pp. 182-183, we find the list of characters of *La ghirlanda*, a brief plot summary and a description of the 1624 edition of the text. A brief overview of the text is also provided in Checchi, *Silvio Fiorillo*, pp. 52-54.

<sup>6</sup>Two of Fiorillo's sons were also well-known actors: Giovan Battista (who first played Scaramuccia and later Trappolino) and Tiberio, the older son (famous in France for his portrayal of Scaramouche). Scholars did not always maintain that Tiberio was Fiorillo's son, perhaps because while Giovan Battista often belonged to the same *commedia* troupe as his father, Tiberio had a career that developed quite independently of his father's (Checchi, *Silvio Fiorillo*, pp. 17-18). For the debate surrounding Tiberio's relation to Fiorillo see in particular Prota-Giurleo, *I teatri di Napoli*, pp. 170-174.

treatise *Dell'arte rappresentativa, premeditata e all'improvviso* (1699), reiterates that the role of Pulcinella was invented "da un Comediante detto Silvio Fiorillo, che si faceva chiamare il Capitan Mattamoros" (cited in Checchi, *Silvio Fiorillo*, 105). Most commentators throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries do not offer significant additional insights into the career of Fiorillo; most simply repeat what Cecchini and Perrucci had already mentioned and refer to the principal troupes to which he belonged and to a couple of his works, usually the later ones (Checchi, *Silvio Fiorillo*, 106-109). Croce, however, does consider Fiorillo one of the outstanding figures of seventeenth-century theatre in Naples: "Il più grande degli attori napoletani, il più illustre inventore di *tipi*, fu Silvio Fiorillo, che creò il *Capitan Matamoros* ... e dette il primo impulso alla maschera di Pulcinella" (Croce, *I teatri di Napoli*, 64-65).

Most twentieth-century scholars of the *commedia dell'arte* have continued to underline Fiorillo's success in the portrayal of the Spanish Captain and to acknowledge the link between Fiorillo and the stock character of Pulcinella.<sup>7</sup> Two relatively recent studies deserve particular mention for their contribution to our understanding of Fiorillo's career and his role in the early *commedia dell'arte*. Checchi's *Silvio Fiorillo in arte Capitan Mattamoros* (1986) is a comprehensive overview of the life and literary production of this actor-author; and Landolfi's presentation of Fiorillo and her analysis of extant letters attributed to Fiorillo in *Comici dell'arte: Corrispondenze* is an indispensable point of departure for the study of Fiorillo.<sup>8</sup>

Although Fiorillo produced several works during his career—two pastoral eclogues, *La ghirlanda* and *L'amor giusto* (1605), a long poem *Il mondo conquistato* (1627), and four other plays: *I tre capitani vanagloriosi* (1621), *L'Ariodante tradito e morte di Polinesso da Rinaldo Paladino* (1623), *La cortesia di Leone e di Ruggiero con la morte di Rodomonte* (1624), *La Lucilla costante* (1632)—until fairly recently his literary production went largely ignored. Two critical editions of *La Lucilla costante* have been pub-

<sup>7</sup>For a detailed discussion of the origins and evolution of Pulcinella in the context of literature in Neapolitan and theatre, see in particular Brindicci, "Il Pulcinella" and "Lo spazio vitale." On the use of Pulcinella in the *commedia dell'arte* in Naples see also Molinari, *La commedia dell'arte*, pp. 203-204. On the question of how we are to interpret the notion that Fiorillo is the "inventor" of Pulcinella and possible antecedents to Fiorillo's Pulcinella, see in particular Croce, *Pulcinella*.

<sup>8</sup>An excellent, succinct overview of Fiorillo's career is also found in Molinari and Guardenti, *La commedia dell'arte*.



lished (one in 1982 edited by Falavolti; the other in 1995 by Brindicci), in addition to a critical edition of *La cortesia di Leone e di Ruggiero* (in 1996 edited by Savoia). That these particular works by Fiorillo should have first attracted scholarly interest is easily explained: *La cortesia* draws on a well known source, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*; *La Lucilla costante*, Fiorillo's last known work, has generated interest because among the *dramatis personae* there appears not only Capitan Matamoros, but also Pulcinella. As Brindicci writes in the preface to her critical edition of *La Lucilla costante*: "La rivalutazione del testo ... è motivata essenzialmente dall'interesse per Pulcinella che qui compare per la prima volta ... in una commedia d'attore, l'attore che, per tradizione, è stato ritenuto l' "inventore" della maschera" (Fiorillo, *La Lucilla costante*, v).

### *La ghirlanda* and Neapolitan dialect literature in the early Seicento

The period of the early seventeenth-century is undoubtedly one of the most important, if not the most important, in the literary history of Neapolitan. It is the era in which a movement to legitimize Neapolitan begins, first by writers, such as Giambattista Basile and Giulio Cesare Cortese, who opt to write literary texts in Neapolitan rather than in Tuscan and, later, by writers who choose to translate great works of literature in Latin and Tuscan into their native Neapolitan (D'Ascoli, *Letteratura dialettale napoletana*, 89-98). It is commonly acknowledged that Cortese and Basile—particularly Cortese—are at the forefront of this movement "with a new linguistic consciousness and a fresh cultural purpose" (Haller, *The Other Italy*, 245), and that writers throughout the seventeenth-century follow the path established by them.

In his writings, Michele Rak has considered this literature from a *Neapolitan* sociocultural perspective, with a view to uncovering its antecedents in the previous century, in various oral and folk traditions—rather than from the perspective of well-established Tuscan models. Construed in this manner, the literature in Neapolitan in the early Seicento forms part of a continuum of oral and popular culture that includes the Neapolitan *canzone*, the *villanelle*, the *farse* and the *gliommeri*, and arguably finds its most sophisticated expression in the works of Basile and Cortese. In *Napoli gentile*, Rak emphasizes the cultural underpinnings of this literary tradition in *lingua napoletana* in the early seventeenth century:

In una prima fase, databile ai primi decenni del secolo, questa tradizione costruiva alcuni suoi immaginari archetipi con una serie di repêchages e manipolazioni attingendo a vari insiemi testuali marginali e sommersi della cultura locale. Recuperava molte canzonette (*villanelle*) di quasi 50

anni prima ... e, di fatto, si allineava prevalentemente alle tradizioni e pratiche del teatro "basso" — le farse, la commedia dell'arte, il racconto teatrale dei cantimbanchi e altri spettacoli da piazza. (11)

Rak underscores the theatrical roots of this literature. In fact, he states: "Chiunque nel secolo scrive in napoletano fa riferimento a una sola accademia, si regola con una sola Crusca: il teatro" (*Napoli gentile*, 231). Theatre—*teatro basso* or *teatro di strada*—provides the outlet for the representation of marginalised characters and helps to shape Neapolitan cultural identity in the early Seicento. Not only does this literature have roots in theatre, but, whatever the genre, it is destined for oral representation: "Molti testi letterari napoletani erano preparati per "funzionare" come testi da spettacolo e da festa" (Rak, *Napoli gentile*, 16). Given the importance of the world of theatre in the establishment of a literature in dialect in the early 1600s, it seems appropriate to turn our attention to a play written by a figure so intimately connected with the *commedia dell'arte* and written prior to the establishment of Basile and Cortese as literary figures to emulate.<sup>9</sup>

One encounters the perception that the Neapolitan of writers such as Basile, Cortese, and their contemporaries is somehow not authentic Neapolitan, but rather a contrived, artificial language. The writings of Croce on this literature did much to contribute to this view: he underscored that the Neapolitan used by these writers was not to be taken too seriously, since these writers had necessarily moulded and manipulated language to suit their artistic aims. In the case of Basile, Croce went so far as to comment that "in italiano mentalmente concepiva e poi traduceva in dialetto" ("Giambattista Basile," 564). In his essay on "La letteratura dialettale riflessa," Croce reduces the use of Neapolitan in Basile and his contemporaries to an artistic device exploited merely for the purpose of using something new and strange (228).<sup>10</sup> Although one must always bear in mind the limitations of written sources in matters of language history, it would seem rather unwise to dismiss the language of these writers on the grounds of a perceived lack of authenticity. Anyone who reads these texts can attest to the fact that they contain features present in Neapolitan to

<sup>9</sup>Cortese's first work, *La Vaisseide*, dates from 1604, but the majority of his works are published later than this date (Cortese, *Opere poetiche*, pp. 5-11). Aside from the dedicatory letter in Neapolitan that prefaces *La Vaisseide*, Basile's works in Neapolitan belong to a later phase in his career: *Lo cunto de li cunti* (1634-36) and *Le muse napoletane* (1635), in fact, were published posthumously.

<sup>10</sup>For a detailed discussion of the problems inherent in the Crocean view of this literature, see Rak, "La tradizione letteraria," in particular pp. 581-585.

this day. It also stands to reason to believe that these writers were faithful—at least to some extent—to a *variety* of Neapolitan. Perhaps it is not the language of the *plebe*, as Arabia, Della Campa and Méry lament in their nineteenth-century work on Neapolitan orthography,<sup>11</sup> but this does not mean that it is not Neapolitan.

### Fiorillo's choice of Neapolitan

There is evidence that Fiorillo stands out among actor-authors of the *commedia dell'arte* for his use of language. In her work, *Commedie dei comici dell'Arte*, Falavolti notes “la posizione del tutto particolare del Fiorillo” (*Commedie dei comici dell'arte*, 31) with respect to other actor-authors of the *commedia dell'arte*. Her comments refer to one of Fiorillo's later works, not to *La ghirlanda*, but they are, nonetheless, noteworthy. Falavolti suggests that other actor-authors make a fairly conventional and ornamental use of dialects as “oggetti di scena” or “abiti di scena.” In Fiorillo, however, rather than having a dialect that is “filtered” for its use on stage, we have what she calls “un uso del dialetto dal di dentro” (*Commedie dei comici dell'arte*, 31). In Landolfi's view, Falavolti does not go far enough in capturing the nature of Fiorillo's Neapolitan: “non ne coglie l'intera portata innovativa e i conseguenti legami del padre di Pulcinella con la nascente letteratura dialettale napoletana” (“Silvio Fiorillo,” 312). More than one scholar has noted how, particularly in the eclogues, Fiorillo adopts a decidedly anti-Tuscan position and seeks to show that Neapolitan is as worthy as Tuscan for artistic objectives. Francesca Savoia writes that in the eclogues “il dialetto napoletano non veniva adottato in funzione puramente accessoria ed esornativa, ma per competere aggressivamente col toscano tradizionalmente usato nel genere pastorale” (Fiorillo, *La cortesia di Leone*, 7). As Bianchi, De Blasi and Librandi note, in the prologue to *L'amor giuusto* Fiorillo claims to write both in Neapolitan and Tuscan in order to “contrapporre i pregi del napoletano ... alle affettazioni toscane” (*I' te vurria parlà*, 93). In fact, Fiorillo states:

... non penzasseno Segnure de vedere ascire da sti Vuosche, Vallune, Montagne, e grotte, quacche Pastore de chiste Toscanielle ntonate, span-tecate, e pompuse co li cauzune de tiffe taffe ... co no parlare quattro, lince, quince, lei, lui, adesso, quantunque ... sì sì, va ca state frische se

<sup>11</sup> Arabia, Della Campa and Méry write: “A noi basta aver dimostrato coi documenti riportati, che gli scrittori del dialetto non scrissero la parlata della plebe di Napoli, non destinarono i loro scritti alla plebe, non ritrassero la vita plebea nelle loro opere” (*L'ortografia del dialetto napoletano*, p. 45).

aspettate de sentire chesto; Vuie sentarrite, la primma, e precepalmente cosa, Segnure miei belle ... cierte parole grosse, grasse, e chiatte, a doie sole, e tonne comme à ballane ... commo sarria à dicere ... craie, pescraie, prescigne, ò pescozze ... ca vale chiù na scarpa cacata de no Napoletano (con leverenzia desse faccie vostre) che quanta Toscanicchie se trovano pe lo munno.<sup>12</sup> (Fiorillo, *L'amor giusto*, 15-16)

As Fiorillo's own words in *L'amor giusto* suggest and as others have also indicated, we are dealing with a writer for whom the adoption of Neapolitan serves a function far greater than mere literary adornment. Fiorillo's use of Neapolitan should be examined in connection with the language of writers such as Basile and Cortese, and his works should be considered in view of the development of a "prestigious" literature in Neapolitan in the early seventeenth-century. As Molinari and Guardenti state, Fiorillo's literary production "è da mettere in relazione con quel movimento di difesa della lingua napoletana—di cui il Fiorillo si era fatto in certa misura portavoce con le egloghe" (*La commedia dell'arte*, 744).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>A loose translation of the passage would be as follows: "Don't think that you'll see pompous Tuscan shepherds coming out of these woods, ravines, mountains and caves ... wearing taffeta pants ... being so stiff and particular ... speaking with words like *quinci, quindi, lei, lui, adesso, quantunque* ... you're kidding yourselves if that's what you expect to hear; my dear spectators, first and foremost you will hear large, fat, substantial words, words with a double sole and round like boiled chestnuts ... words like *craie, pescraie, prescigne* or *pescozze* ... because (with all due respect) a shoe soiled with the feces of a Neapolitan is worth more than all the Tuscans found in the world." *Craie, pescraie, prescigne* and *pescozze* are, respectively, Neapolitan for *tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, three days from now, four days from now*. For a further explanation of this passage, see Bianchi, De Blasi and Librandi, *I te vurria parlà*, p. 114 n. 7; and for other references to the "large, substantial words" of Neapolitan (in Cortese, Basile and others), in connection with the apparent *antitoscanismo* of writers in the early 1600s in Naples, see pp. 93-96 in the same study by Bianchi, De Blasi and Librandi. An excellent overview of the positions of various Neapolitan writers with respect to language and dialects in the 1600s is found in Haller, *The Other Italy*, pp. 256-257.

<sup>13</sup>The question of whether or not Fiorillo personally knew Basile and Cortese does not have a definitive answer. There does not seem to be any evidence of a connection between Fiorillo and Basile, but it is possible that Fiorillo might have known Cortese. As many scholars note, the first literary reference to Pulcinella appears in Cortese's *Viaggio di Parnaso* (1621), which could be interpreted as a tribute to Fiorillo's character. In addition, the actor Bartolomeo Zito, Cortese's friend and author of the *Defennemiento de la Vuiaasseide* (1628), is also the author of one of the dedicatory sonnets published with Fiorillo's *L'amor giusto*. For

Having established Fiorillo's position both from the point of view of the *commedia dell'arte* and from that of literature in Neapolitan in the early Seicento, we will now focus our attention on particulars concerning *La ghirlanda*. After a few introductory comments on the structure and plot, I will discuss its textual history and a number of salient features of the Neapolitan in which it is written.

### *La ghirlanda*: brief notes on structure and plot

As already mentioned, *La ghirlanda* is a pastoral eclogue. Its five acts are composed of three-line stanzas with an interlocking rhyme scheme (*aba, bcb, cdc, ded*, etc.—the classic *terza rima*) and hendecasyllabic verses. Several Neapolitan characters populate the work, including four shepherds (one named Fiorillo), a ploughman, and a citizen who recites the prologue. Two nymphs (Ardelia and Argilia), Venus, Cupid and the Minister of the Temple of Love are the principal Tuscan-speaking characters. The principal love intrigue involves Ardelia and the Neapolitan shepherds Carella and Micco: Ardelia is unable to make Carella reciprocate her affections without the intervention of Venus and Cupid, but she could have the love of Micco in whom she has no interest. It must be mentioned, however, that although the central courtship is between Ardelia and Carella, Fiorillo reserves significant dramatic space for the *character* Fiorillo, who is the love interest of the other nymph, Argilia. At one point, Argilia leaves Fiorillo's side prior to his waking up, a development which provides a reason, upon discovering that Argilia is gone, for Fiorillo to "become mad" and to embark on a lengthy monologue. In addition, the *ghirlanda* of the title refers to the garland given by Argilia to Fiorillo.

### *La ghirlanda*: textual history

Since there is some confusion in the scholarship concerning whether or not *La ghirlanda* is Fiorillo's first published work, it is a matter that ought briefly to be addressed. Based on known extant texts, there is no evidence of Fiorillo having published anything prior to his first two eclogues, *L'amor giusto* and *La ghirlanda*.<sup>14</sup> Although some scholars indicate that *L'amor gius-*

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details on the connection between Fiorillo, Cortese and Zito, see Brindicci, "Il Pulcinella," in particular pp. 61-65.

<sup>14</sup>Brindicci ("Il Pulcinella," p. 82 n. 54) suggests that perhaps *Il Mondo conquistato*, Fiorillo's poem in twenty-four stanzas, is from as early as 1600, but the extant editions of this work are both from the 1620s: 1624 and 1627 (Landolfi, "Silvio Fiorillo," p. 318).



to is Fiorillo's first work and *La ghirlanda* his second,<sup>15</sup> in fact *La ghirlanda* appears to be Fiorillo's first work. The confusion stems in part from the dates of various reprints and in part, of course, from the fact that we are dealing with works that have received limited scholarly attention. The Naples 1608 edition of *La ghirlanda*, which seems to be the earliest available and to which many refer, is a reprint of the Naples 1602 edition: it bears the year 1602 on the title page and its colophon clearly states that it is a reprint of the 1602 edition.<sup>16</sup> The earliest date associated with *L'amor giusto* is 1604, although most scholars refer to the 1605 edition published in Milan.<sup>17</sup> Although both works belong to an early period in Fiorillo's career, the publication of *La ghirlanda* clearly predates that of *L'amor giusto*. In addition, it is clearly stated in the prologue to *L'amor giusto* that this work—*L'amor giusto*—is Fiorillo's second eclogue “meza Napoletana, e meza Toscanesa” (12). Since we know only of two eclogues by Fiorillo, this internal reference can only confirm that *La ghirlanda* is the author's first eclogue.

In all, there are four extant editions of *La ghirlanda*. The 1608 edition, although a reprint of the 1602 edition according to colophon, appears to have undergone changes before being reprinted. If we are to believe what Fiorillo writes in the dedicatory letter, dated 1 April 1608, to the Duke of Gravina, Antonio Ursino, the 1608 edition represents a revised, expanded and embellished version with respect to what was published in 1602:

<sup>15</sup>For example, Bartoli, *Notizie istoriche*, p. 223; Prota-Giurleo, *I teatri di Napoli*, p. 169; Molinari, *La commedia dell'arte*, p. 201; Checchi, *Silvio Fiorillo*, p. 50; Rak, *Napoli gentile*, p. 218.

<sup>16</sup>The colophon reads: IN NAPOLI, / Nella Stamperia di Tarquinio / Longo. 1602. & ristampata / per Gio. Battista Gar / gano, & Matteo / Nucci. 1608.

<sup>17</sup>Allacci, *Drammaturgia*, p. 60; Martorana, *Notizie biografiche*, p. 200; Brindicci in Fiorillo, *La Lucilla costante*, p. 162; Prota-Giurleo, *I teatri di Napoli*, p. 169. Checchi (*Silvio Fiorillo*, p. 50) and Landolfi (“Silvio Fiorillo,” p. 318) mention an edition of *L'amor giusto* published in Naples by Stigliola in 1604. Bianchi, De Blasi and Librandi (*I te vurrìa parlà*, p. 93) and Rak (*Napoli gentile*, p. 238 n. 2) make use of the Naples 1605 edition published by Stigliola, and Rak notes that the dedicatory letter of this edition bears the date 22 October 1604. The dedicatory letter found in the 1605 Milanese edition by Malatesta bears the date 3 August 1605. Aside from these early editions, there is only one additional known edition of *L'amor giusto*, published by Beltrano in Naples in 1625 (cited by both Checchi and Landolfi). A comment by Martorana suggests that the work may have had more editions than these: “Avendo avuto la disgrazia fino a questo momento di non poter vedere *L'amor giusto* del Fiorillo che ebbe più edizioni e non rare (al dir di alcuno)” (*Notizie biografiche*, p. 434).

Perilche essendomi molt'anni sono non senza industria affaticato intorno al lavoro d'una rustica Ghirlanda; e conoscendola per all'hora assai povero d'ornamenti, volsi lasciarla nella solitudine sepolta: ma hora cresciuta, & imbellita del suo dicevole decoro, mosso da paterno affetto, e desideroso di farla uscire in luce; hò giudicato dedicarla à lei in segno della mia servitù." (8)

At this point we cannot know what changes to his original work Fiorillo deemed necessary, but it seems prudent to identify this first available edition as solely that of 1608.

In addition to the 1608 edition, there is a Milanese edition, published by Malatesta, presumably from 1611: there is no publication date in the text, but the date of the dedicatory letter is 29 July 1611. Both the 1608 and 1611 editions clearly identify Fiorillo with his stage persona, Capitan Mattamoros: each title page (recall that the 1608 title page bears the date 1602) qualifies Fiorillo as "Comico / detto il Capitan Mattamoros," and each title page displays the well known woodcut image of the Spanish *capitano*, found also in some editions of Fiorillo's other works.<sup>18</sup>

The 1624 edition, published by Combi in Venice, seems largely a reprint of the 1611 edition: the dedicatory letter is identical to the one found in the 1611 edition and the same dedicatory poems precede the text.<sup>19</sup> The text itself presents only minor orthographic changes with respect to the 1611 edition.<sup>20</sup> The fourth and final extant edition is from 1652 and was published by Cavallo in Naples; it contains no dedicatory letter or son-

<sup>18</sup>Landolfi, "Silvio Fiorillo," pp. 323-324. Fiorillo's link with the character Capitan Mattamoros is firmly established by the late 1500s-early 1600s. Not only does he identify himself through this role on the title page of the 1602 edition (reprinted in the 1608 edition), but the first of Fiorillo's letters analyzed by Landolfi ("Silvio Fiorillo," p. 321) bears the signature "detto il Capitan Mattamoros" and is dated 20 November 1599. Additionally, the 1608 edition of *La ghirlanda* is prefaced (pp. 3-6) by an eight-stanza poem, in Spanish and Tuscan, entitled *Por el retrato del Capitan Mattamoros* "che non c'entra niente con l'azione ma presenta l'attore nel suo doppio volto: il vanaglorioso (in spagnolo) e il pauroso (in toscano)" (Rak, *Napoli gentile*, p. 232).

<sup>19</sup>The first of these poems is a sonnet written by Fiorillo to Fabio Visconti the addressee of the dedicatory letter. The following six poems (five of which are sonnets) are in honour of Fiorillo and his work and are composed by Ottavio Buono, Giovan Battista Composti, Antonio Carnevale, Fabritio Cinamo, Daniel Geofilo Piccigallo, Salvatore Scarano.

<sup>20</sup>For example, there are minor changes in punctuation and in spelling: an instance of *persutto* in 1611 becomes *presutto* in 1624; the accent marking *sì* (second person singular of the verb "to be") is removed in the 1624 edition. Overall, however, the text appears to be essentially the same as the 1611 Milanese edition.

nets, but shares with the 1608 edition the inclusion of an eight-stanza poem entitled *Por el retrato del Capitan Mattamoros* (see note 18). The 1652 edition does present noteworthy orthographic changes with respect to previous editions and will thus be discussed in more detail below.<sup>21</sup>

Two other editions of *La ghirlanda* are mentioned in some of the scholarship, but a search for these has proved futile thus far. Allacci, Bartoli, and Prota-Giurleo, for example, mention a 1609 edition which has been cited sporadically by other scholars.<sup>22</sup> In addition, a 1644 edition—published in Naples by Cavallo, the same publisher responsible for the 1652 edition—is cited by Brindicci.<sup>23</sup> The fact that *La ghirlanda* was reprinted as often as all of these editions indicate, suggests that it was received favourably in its time and that it had some importance in cultural circles. It appears to be the only work by Fiorillo to have been the object of so many reprintings and, as far as we know, it is the only text by Fiorillo to have seen intermittent publication over a fifty-year period: 1602-1652.

### Linguistic features of Fiorillo's Neapolitan

The following discussion of Fiorillo's language will be limited to observations concerning the Neapolitan portions of *La ghirlanda*. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to look at the Tuscan used by Fiorillo, future research will need to examine this code as well and the function of the two linguistic codes in the work. Since Fiorillo is an actor-author of the early *commedia dell'arte*, his works ought to shed light on language use in theatre at the time.<sup>24</sup> The discussion that follows focusses on some of the

<sup>21</sup>The following copies of the four extant editions were consulted for this study: (1) 1608 edition: Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples; (2) 1611 edition: Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto and the British Library; (3) 1624 edition: Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples; (4) 1652 edition: Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples. The copy of *L'amor giusto* (Milan, 1605) consulted for this study is in the British Library.

<sup>22</sup>Allacci, *Drammaturgia*, pp. 398-399; Bartoli, *Notizie storiche*, p. 223; and Prota-Giurleo, *I teatri di Napoli*, 169. If these references are accurate, we may actually be dealing with different editions published in the same year: according to Bartoli, there is a 1609 edition published in Naples by Longo; according to Allacci, there is a 1609 edition published in Naples by Bozzimo.

<sup>23</sup>Brindicci, "Il Pulcinella," p. 79 n. 12; Fiorillo, *La Lucilla costante*, p. 162; Checchi, *Silvio Fiorillo*, p. 133; and Checchi, "Fiorillo," p. 190.

<sup>24</sup>Language use in the *commedia dell'arte* has not been studied in great detail, but one study conducted on Perrucci's *Dell'arte rappresentativa* did show that while other dialects seem to have been diluted for use on stage, this was not true of Neapolitan: "Two of the dialects of the Commedia dell'Arte, beside Tuscan, were

most striking characteristics of Fiorillo's Neapolitan and on those features which appear interesting from a diachronic perspective. All page references for the examples cited correspond to the 1608 edition.<sup>25</sup>

### Phonological and morphophonological features

We find syntactic doubling fairly regularly marked in the case of *v* - *bb*, the latter represented by a single *b*; the complex alternation between *v* and *b*—betacism—in (respectively) weak and strong position is well known in Neapolitan.<sup>26</sup> In *La ghirlanda* in weak position we typically find *v*: *chino de viole* (63), *sso vosco* (48), *no vase* (28), *te vorria dicere* (39), *no vecchio* (66); in word-initial position, following an element that produces *raddoppiamento sintattico*,<sup>27</sup> we find *b*: *le biole* (26), *A bieccio latro* (29), *che bolite* (55), *Pe buie* (64), *tre buoie* (86), *chiù bieccio* (92). Syntactic doubling, however, is not always indicated for *v* - *b*, and is rarely indicated for other consonants. There are a few examples of *ghi* (the strong counterpart to [j] in Neapolitan) following forms with reduplicating power: *Pe ghire* (45), *a ghire* (46); but there are also examples in which the doubling is expected and not indicated: *so ianco* (27), *pe no ire* (47), *comme a iaccio* (60). Syntactic doubling provoked by the feminine plural and neuter definite articles is also only sporadically indicated: *le biole* (cited above), *le boglie soie* (30), *lo ssaie* (27), *tello borria dicere* (39). Even these few examples, particularly of the long consonant following the neuter definite article, are valuable, given their rare appearance in Old Neapolitan texts; Fiorillo seems to indicate this more frequently than other authors of his era.<sup>28</sup>

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always to be spoken in a pure form, namely Neapolitan and Venetian" (Clivio, "The Language", p. 227).

<sup>25</sup>All examples provided are given in the form in which they appear in the edition cited. The orthography has not been altered, except to restore the distinction between *u* and *v*.

<sup>26</sup>De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, pp. 228-229; Tulleners-Bloemen, "Il betacismo"; Bloemen, "L'analisi diacronica del betacismo."

<sup>27</sup>For the forms that provoke *raddoppiamento sintattico* in Neapolitan see Bichelli, *Grammatica del dialetto napoletano*, pp. 60-62 and De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, pp. 57-62. On syntactic doubling in the dialects of southern Italy, historically an assimilatory process, see Fanciullo and Borrelli, *Raddoppiamento sintattico*; for the dialect of Naples in particular see also Andalò, "Il raddoppiamento sintattico," and Bullock, "Consonant Geminatio."

<sup>28</sup>De Blasi and Imperatore (*Il napoletano parlato*, p. 240) cite examples of the type *chesto mmale*, *lo ffuoco*, with the double consonant following neuter determiners, from Fiorillo's *L'amor giusto*.



As De Blasi and Imperatore (*Il napoletano parlato*, 206-207) have already noted for *L'amor giusto*, Fiorillo uses *hi* to render the Neapolitan sound derived from FL: in that eclogue, he writes *hiato*, *hiumme*, *abievoluto* (< FLATU, FLUMEN, FLEBILIS). Many examples of this type are found also in *La ghirlanda*: *hiuocolo* (21), *Hiorillo* (22), *lo hioe* (29), *hiure* (30), *Hiorelluccio* (44), *hiummo* (47), *Hiato* (79), *le hiamme* (90). Typically, seventeenth-century writers use *shi* to represent [ʃ] < FL, and *sci/scie* is employed to represent [ʃʃ], the palatal fricative derived from other etymologies (Moro, *Aspects of Old Neapolitan*, 45-67). De Blasi and Imperatore suggest that Fiorillo's *hi* might be indicative of [j] rather than [ʃ], given that the former necessarily preceded the latter chronologically, and given that "ancora a fine Cinquecento la vicenda della sorte di FL- non era definitivamente risolta" (*Il napoletano parlato*, 206). Two factors, however, favour the possibility that Fiorillo might have been attempting to represent [ʃ], a sound that was relatively recent and had no standard way of being represented—we must bear in mind that Cortese and Basile, who opt for *shi*, do so later than the first publication of *La ghirlanda*. *La ghirlanda* presents *scioreva* (20) and *ascevoluto* (42) (unlike the *abievoluto* of *L'amor giusto*), both of which remain unchanged in later editions. Although these examples may be simply orthographic oversights, they suggest that the sound represented with *sci/scie* in these words had to be quite similar to the sound represented by *hi*. Second, as will be discussed ahead in more detail, in the latest extant edition of *La ghirlanda* (1652), all instances of *hi* are eliminated in favour of *shi*.

Not surprisingly, we find consistently represented the evolution of PL > *chi* [kj] in Romance forms inherited directly by Neapolitan: *chianura* (28), *chiù* (33), *lo chianto* (37), *chiuppe* (39), *schiecchio* (44). In learned forms, however, as is typical also of the language of Basile (Moro, *Aspects of Old Neapolitan*, 57), we find the dialect treatment of postconsonantal [l], whereby the [l] is rhotacized: *suppreco* (19), *pubrecamente* 21), *contempro* (39), *concrudo* (75), *Egroca* (93). A rhotacized [l] is also consistently found in preconsonantal position (before non-dental consonants), a Neapolitan feature "tuttora forse considerato plebeo e 'basso'" (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 217-218) and not often indicated in texts prior to the 1600s: *pormone* (30, 63), *serve* (37), *cuorpo* (42), *sarvo* (47), *vorpa* (55), *parmo* (59).

Very well documented in *La ghirlanda*, as in other texts from the 1600s, are the morphophonemic alternations that result from metaphony of both high mid and low mid vowels. The effects of high mid vowel metaphony (tonic *e* > *i* and *o* > *u*, predominantly in masculine forms and



in second person singular and plural verbal forms), as a result of a prior influence of final -i or -u, are discernible in countless examples: *chisso* (39), *bavive* (45), *coglite* (55), *li rine* (65), *zinno* (66), *figliulo* (23),<sup>29</sup> *fuste* (37), *surdo* (48), *pasture* (64), *curre* (68), *pormune* (91), *segnure* (93). Etymological feminine metaphonic plurals, judging by the language of Neapolitan writers, appear to be on the decline in the early 1600s under the influence of analogy (Moro, *Aspects of Old Neapolitan*, 87-114). And in fact, in *La ghirlanda*, there are only a couple of examples of such metaphonic forms: *frunne* (27), *le raggiune toie* (73). Metaphonic diphthongs (tonic [ɛ] > [je] and [ɔ] > [wo] under the influence of a prior final -i or -u, again in masculine singular and/or plural forms, and in certain second person singular and plural forms), a Neapolitan feature at times suppressed in literary texts in Neapolitan from the 13- and 1400s (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 180-187), are not lacking in Neapolitan texts of the seventeenth century.<sup>30</sup> In *La ghirlanda*, too, there is ample evidence of such diphthongs: *miettelo* (24), *lietto* (27), *pietto* (38), *cortielo* (39), *li viene* (47), *rieste* (67), *puopole* (20), *uorto* (24), *iuorno* (27), *uosso* (54), *me puorte* (64), *puorco* (72). Two instances of the metaphonic diphthong in the feminine plural form of “verde” stand out: *serve vierde* (37) and *frasche vierde* (92).

A feature of the language of Basile, Cortese, and other Neapolitan writers of the seventeenth century as well, is the sporadic use of the Hispanic diphthong *ue* in the place of Neapolitan *uo*. It is difficult to gauge whether or not its inconsistent use in texts of the period reflected a possible Neapolitan pronunciation (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 188-189); lexical items with *ue* are always used in combination with their counterparts with *uo*. In Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti* and *Le muse napoletane*, the Neapolitan form with *uo* is clearly dominant with respect to its counterpart with Hispanic *ue*—with the exception of *uerco*, which Basile uses 88 times in *Lo cunto*, as opposed to *uorco*, used 23 times (Moro, *Aspects of Old Neapolitan*, 142-145). The 1608 edition of *La ghirlanda* presents very few examples indeed of the diphthong *ue*: *vuestro* (22), *muerzo* (25), *fuerze* (72). Interestingly, in addition to these forms, other items containing *ue*—*despuerto*, *huerto*, *muerto*, *puerte*, *puesto*—appear in the 1611 edition, and do so more frequently. This change in favour of more forms

<sup>29</sup>The pre-metaphony tonic vowel at the basis of the Neapolitan form *figliulo* is [o] rather than [ɔ] (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, p. 49).

<sup>30</sup>For an inventory of the metaphonic data in *Lo cunto de li cunti*, see Moro, *Aspects of Old Neapolitan*, pp. 115-145.

with *ue* in a later edition of *La ghirlanda* invites further investigation, as does the issue of the overall status of such forms in the language of Neapolitan writers.

### Morphological and syntactic features

The apocopated infinitive—*parlà, capì*—characteristic of modern Neapolitan (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 113), and of many dialects of southern Italy (Rohlf, *Grammatica storica*, 359), is rarely encountered in old Neapolitan texts. One study of *Lo cunto de li cunti* found no examples of the truncated infinitive (Vizmuller-Zocco, “Alcune considerazioni,” 129). Fiorillo’s language in *La ghirlanda*, while undoubtedly favouring full infinitival forms, does present several examples of the apocopated infinitive: *E bogliote donà na bella cosa* (27), *A muodo de sonà le ciaramelle* (59), *me faie venì l’appietto* (71), *faccioue passà sta fantasia* (62), *Ne maie cerca de dareme martiello* (77, corrected to *cercà*, with the word-final accent, in the 1652 edition), *Pe fareme schezza le cellevrella* (86, changed to *schizzar* in the 1611 edition), *E quanto grano nge po i a no crivo* (86), *E bi se te può fa no bello vagno* (91).

A feature of Neapolitan texts from the 1300s and 1400s is the presence of inflection (for person and number) in non-finite verbal forms, i.e. the infinitive, the gerund and the past participle (Loporcaro, “L’infinito coniugato”; Sornicola, “Campania,” 333; De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 251–255). There is textual evidence of these forms until the 1500s, after which they seem to disappear, “visto che sono respinti da tutti gli autori dialettali, in primo luogo Cortese e Basile” (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 254). To date, the only exception to this apparent obliteration of inflected infinitivals in texts of the 1600s is found in the language of Fiorillo. De Blasi and Imperatore (*Il napoletano parlato*, 254–255) cite several forms from *L’amor giusto*: *ghiremo, haveremo, farono, essennono*. From *La ghirlanda* we can add another example of the inflected infinitive (third person plural): *Nè l’autre sanno manco, che nge farono* (22).

Several interesting present tense (indicative) forms also emerge from *La ghirlanda*. There are numerous first person singular forms with an epenthetic, analogically-formed velar consonant: *stongo* (29, 58), *dongo* (35, 58), *songo* (46, 47). Forms such as these, typical of Neapolitan (Sornicola, “Campania,” 333), are still widely encountered particularly in areas outside Naples (Radtke, *I dialetti*, 87). A double velar replaces the original long dental consonant in *te mpromecco* (67) (cf. [mɛk:ə] “metto” and [aʃpek:ə] “aspetto” cited by Radtke (*I dialetti*, 87) for the province of Naples). Moreover, we find examples of the epenthetic *g* analogically

extended to other persons: *singhe* (27, 30) and *dinghe* (40) are second person singular forms, while one occurrence of *songo* marks the third person plural (a rarity in Old Neapolitan texts according to De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 243): *E adonca se à sto siecolo chiù sapie / Songo li recetante* (22). Far more common than these forms, however, are the numerous first person singular examples with a deleted intervocalic consonant, typical of Neapolitan texts from the 13- and 1400s (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 213): *seo* (24, 67), *vao* (41, 59) / *baio* (45), *preo* (45, 77), *veo* (46, 69) / *beo* (40, 45), *creo* (87, 88).

In *La ghirlanda* Fiorillo uses fairly consistently the Neapolitan future and conditional forms. For the future, forms in *-aggio* prevail: *sarraggio* (29) / *saraggio* (63), *beveraggio* (31), *faraggio* (42). For the conditional we find forms in *-ia* regularly used: *romparia* (24), *vorria* (27) / *borria* (40), *haverria* (32), *farria* (42), *decerria* (46), *Me pareria* (91) for the first person and third person singular, and *borrisse* (24) and *sarisse* (88) for the second person singular. One example of the periphrastic future, expressed by the present of TO HAVE + INFINITIVE, as in *aggia parlà*, found in modern spoken Neapolitan (Bianchi, De Blasi and Librandi, *I' te vurria parlà*, 13), is also found in *La ghirlanda*: *O comme t'haggio ammare zantragliosa* (68).

*La ghirlanda* presents numerous examples of both the present perfect and preterite; although my focus here is on formal aspects, a more detailed study should also take into account questions of function. Among the numerous examples of the present perfect we find: *c'haggio fatta* (42), *t'haggio fatto* (79), *t'haggio ntiso* (76), *m'haie fatte* (78), *maie dato* (83), *c'havite dato* (88), *puosto m'haie* (86), *è iuto* (64), *simmo arrevate* (87), *site venute* (87). A few strong preterite forms for the first and third person singular appear: *appe* (21), *crise* (31), *fice* (83), *fecence* (20), *fece* (21), *vozence* (20), *voze* (74). But there are also numerous examples of weak preterites in *-ette*, the dominant type in modern Neapolitan:<sup>31</sup> *trasette* (20), *piacette* (20), *dette* (22), *Sagliette* (30), *Sentiette* (74), *Stiette* (88). The archaic perfect in *-ao*, typical of Neapolitan texts from the 1300s and 1400s (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 245), appears once in the form *legao* (90).

There are several examples of paragogic *ne* in Fiorillo's work. The majority of these involve the cliticisation of *ne* to the pronouns *te* and *me* following the prepositions *a* and *per/pe*: *Pigliate à mene* (26), *Guodote à mene* (27), *pe tene me konzummo* (55), *commo à tene* (92). This type of paragoge is documented in Neapolitan texts from as early as the 1300s, and in

<sup>31</sup> For a detailed discussion of strong and weak preterite forms in Old Neapolitan, see Pasquarelli Clivio, *La formazione storica*, pp. 179-249.

the 1600s there is evidence of paragogic *ne* extended to *tu* and *chiù* (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 231). Indeed, *tune* and *chiune* appear in *La ghirlanda*, as does one instance of *oimene*: *No la canusce tune* (27), *si contenta tune* (63), *E non saraggio chiune sconsolato* (63), *Ohime li rine, oimene* (65).

The example cited above, *Pigliate à mene*, is also interesting from the point view of the prepositional accusative construction found in Ibero-Romance and in modern Neapolitan. The term *prepositional accusative* refers to the phenomenon whereby a [+ human] direct object is preceded by the preposition *a*: for example, Spanish *Veo a María*. Sornicola's study of the development of this structure in Old Neapolitan showed that, although the structure is rare in the texts from the 1600s considered for her study (*Lo cunto de li cunti* and Sarnelli's *Posilecheata*), the preposition does appear regularly where the head of the NOUN PHRASE is a personal pronoun ("L'oggetto," 74-76), such as in *Pigliate à mene*. Citing examples similar to this, including ones with the verb *pigliare*, from the texts examined, Sornicola ("L'oggetto," 77) is able to confirm the importance of tonic personal pronouns in the evolution of the construction.

The Neapolitan used in *La ghirlanda* also presents examples of the double imperative. The double imperative, of the type *va' ioca* substitutes the structure IMPERATIVE + A + INFINITIVE; as De Blasi and Imperatore explain, it is rarely found in old texts, probably in part because it is limited to direct speech, and perhaps because it was the object of "una specie di censura" (*Il napoletano parlato*, 260-261). *La ghirlanda* offers a clear example of such a structure: *Và cuoglie le biole* (26). We also find examples of the double imperative in the second person plural, involving *ire*, whereby the first form is in the second person singular and the subsequent form is in the second person plural (with or without enclitic pronouns): *Và iate va faciteve* (55).<sup>32</sup>

A principal feature of modern Neapolitan syntax is the proclitic position of pronouns dependent on infinitives: *pe te fa senti* (De Blasi and Imperatore, *Il napoletano parlato*, 261). In her study of the position of clitics in Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti*, Viztmüller-Zocco found that clitic placement did not necessarily follow the rules of the modern dialect. In the case of MODAL + INFINITIVE, the majority of the examples studied did show a preponderance of the proclitic position for pronouns (the typical order associated with Neapolitan); but in the case of PREP + INFINITIVE she found

<sup>32</sup>Bichelli (*Grammatica*, p. 211) cites such examples for modern Neapolitan: *Va jatevenne* and *Va jate*; he admits, however, that the use of the latter example is quite rare.



considerable oscillation in the language of Basile—her findings, in fact, lead her to conclude that Basile was not entirely faithful to Neapolitan syntax (“Alcune considerazioni,” 130). In Fiorillo’s Neapolitan, the proclitic position is by far the dominant one; we find numerous examples of pronouns preceding the structure MODAL + INFINITIVE, and preceding the infinitive in the structure PREP + INFINITIVE: *O che me pozza accidere* (24), *io tello boria dicere* (39), *Io me vorria scannare* (59), *no la pozzo ammare* (71), *m’ha voluto commetare* (85), *E tu cride demme delleggiare* (24), *de lo fare* (46), *Demme arrobare* (47), *de te dare* (58), *pe te contentare* (67), *de te conzolare* (67), *E pe mme fare* (88). There are significantly fewer cases in which we find the pronoun attached to an infinitive following a preposition: *à darele* (67), *De fareme tirare* (78), *Pe fareme* (86). Although there is some oscillation, it is clear that proclisis is dominant in the language of Fiorillo, but enclisis is not unknown in the structure PREP + INFINITIVE, as Vizmuller-Zocco found for the language of *Lo cunto*.

Enclisis, of course, is found in other contexts. It is the only option allowed for the affirmative imperative in Neapolitan, and thus we find: *miettelo* (24), *Damme* (28), *Vuoglieme bene* (55), *Portatemenne* (64), *Tenitemella* (66), *Rompitelo* (63), *Fuimmongene* (67). More striking than these examples are the many cases in *La ghirlanda* in which clitics are attached to a finite, non-imperative, verb, particularly following the conjunction *e*: *e basove / Le dotte mano* (22), *e donate lo core* (23), *E bogliote donà* (27), *e ... sentome venire* (69), *e bogliome coccare* (69), *Ed esceme lo spireto* (71). The phenomenon is well documented in Old Italian,<sup>33</sup> and is also known in Old Neapolitan: Rohlfs (*Grammatica storica*, 171) cites examples from the *Bagni di Pozzuoli*. Since modern Neapolitan rejects enclisis in finite verbal forms (Bichelli, *Grammatica*, 131-138), save in the affirmative imperative as noted above, it is difficult to gauge at this point to what extent we are dealing with literary imitation on the part of Fiorillo (or in the language of other Neapolitan writers of the same era), with the exploitation of a rhythmic device (to achieve stress on a specific syllable of the hendecasyllable in the case of *La ghirlanda*), or with the representation of a linguistic reality. It must be noted that the latter possibility seems not entirely out of the question. Basile’s *Lo cunto de li cunti* presents sporadic evidence of an enclitic attached to a finite verb: Vizmuller-Zocco notes the example *Aggiotence ncappata* with the clitic following the auxiliary (130); Basile *Lo Cunto* also writes *haince apierte l’uocchie* (154), *haiela trovata* (722), *e*

<sup>33</sup>In Italian the phenomenon persists to some extent in later centuries, in the language of Straparola and Bandello, particularly after the conjunction *e* (Rohlfs, *Grammatica storica*, pp. 170-172).



*volitene vedere* (772), *e dicelo* (664), none of which has an imperative function. There also appear to be fossilized expressions in Neapolitan in which enclisis follows a finite verb. Basile and Cortese use expressions such as *dicote e dissete*, *dicome e disse* (D'Ascoli, *Nuovo vocabolario*, 260); in *Lo cunto* we find not only *dapo' mille dicote e dissete* (76), *ma che tante dicote e dissete* (616), but also the expression *damme e dotte* (772). In addition, D'Ambra's Neapolitan-Tuscan dictionary, from 1873, records the expression *Sì e vogliola* (cited in Rohlf's, *Grammatica*, 174), the formulaic response given by the groom during a marriage ceremony: "Volete la tal di tale per moglie ec. E lo sposo risponde: *Sì e Vogliola*. Onde far il *Sì e Vogliola* appo noi significa Matrimonio" (D'Ambra, *Vocabolario*, 398). The examples from *La ghirlanda* and from *Lo cunto*, and the number of Old Neapolitan expressions in which enclisis follows a finite verbal form, suggest that we might not be dealing solely with literary imitation or artistic creativity.

### The written code

A thorough account of the editions of *La ghirlanda* should also shed light on the orthographic practices employed by Neapolitan writers in the early 1600s. A contentious issue for Galiani and Oliva, who wrote on language matters concerning Neapolitan in the eighteenth-century, was the orthography used by seventeenth-century writers, in particular Basile and Cortese. Galiani, for example, in his *Del dialetto napoletano* (40-46) vehemently condemns the use of certain orthographic practices Basile and Cortese saw fit to use (the use of *sh*, the representation of syntactic doubling, etc.), and which others chose to imitate.<sup>34</sup> The use of *sh* [ʃ] < FL, a major feature of the language of Basile and Cortese, was problematic not only for Galiani, but also for Oliva ("Grammatica," 228), and must have generated debate for some time, given its discussion in *Ortografia del dialetto napoletano*, published in 1887 (Arabia, Della Campa and Méry, *L'ortografia*, 13, 23-24). As mentioned above, Fiorillo adopts *hi* in earlier editions of *La ghirlanda* to represent the Neapolitan sound derived from FL- (*Hiorillo*, *hiore*, *hiummo*, *hianme*, etc.), but in the 1652 edition we find all instances of *hi* altered to *shi*: *Shiorillo*, *shiure*, *shire*, *Shiorelluccio*, *shiummo*, *shiamme*, *shiato*. Who is responsible for the change: the publisher or Fiorillo? If the

<sup>34</sup>Galiani argues that Neapolitan has had to suffer the consequences of the "ortografia barbara e mostruosa" with which its first writers "il Basile ed il Cortese, lo cominciarono a scrivere" (*Del dialetto napoletano*, p. 41).

<sup>35</sup>As discussed above, although some sources indicate a 1644 edition, published in Naples by Cavallo, it has thus far not been possible to locate such an edition.

1652 edition is merely a reprint of the 1644 edition,<sup>35</sup> it is possible that Fiorillo himself authored the changes. Fiorillo is believed to have died in the early 1640s, some time between 1641 and 1644, but a precise date is not known (Landolfi, "Silvio Fiorillo," 317). It is also possible, however, that the publisher effected these changes: after all, these late editions of *La ghirlanda* were both published in Naples by Camillo Cavallo, the same publisher responsible for more than one reprint of Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti* (1645 and 1654) and for reprints of several of Cortese's works between 1644 and 1646 (Cortese, *Opere poetiche*, 10-11). Perhaps all we can say with certainty at this point is that the change from *hi* to *shi* further attests to the influence of Basile and Cortese. Although difficult to prove, it is not implausible that the idea for *shi* in Basile and Cortese is based on Fiorillo's *hi*. A comparison with the Neapolitan contained in other works by Fiorillo should help to elucidate this aspect of the orthography, as well as other orthographic matters, such as the representation of double consonants and the use of the diphthong *ue*.

### Concluding remarks

These preliminary observations show how a study of Fiorillo's language in *La ghirlanda* can yield valuable insights concerning Neapolitan in the early seventeenth-century. A thorough examination of his language, together with a systematic analysis of the language of other writers of the Seicento who opted for Neapolitan in their works, would permit us to begin to arrive at a typology of Neapolitan in the 1600s. Such an investigation, of course, ought not only to consider questions of form—phonological, morphological and syntactic features—but also to address issues pertaining to the lexicon and language function. A detailed study of *La ghirlanda* will also require a comparison with the use of Neapolitan in Fiorillo's other works, particularly with a view to uncovering any variation in language—not necessarily reflecting linguistic changes, but rather extralinguistic factors: perhaps changes in the type of audience expected for a particular work or changes brought about on account of perceived trends in works written in Neapolitan. Finally, of course, an analysis of *La ghirlanda* should also pay close attention to the Tuscan it contains and to the interaction between the two linguistic codes found in the work. An investigation of language use not only in *La ghirlanda*, but also in Fiorillo's other works, could prove useful for our understanding of the use of language, and *languages*, in the *com-media dell'arte*.

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ANGELO PRINCIPE

CENTRING THE PERIPHERY.

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE ITALIAN CANADIAN  
PRESS: 1950-1990

The Radical Press

From the end of the Second World War to the 1980s, eleven Italian Canadian radical periodicals were published: seven left-wing and four right-wing, all but one in Toronto.<sup>1</sup> The left-wing publications were: *Il lavoratore* (the Worker), *La parola* (the Word), *La carota* (the Carrot), *Forze nuove* (New Forces), *Avanti! Canada* (Forward! Canada), *Lotta unitaria* (United Struggle), and *Nuovo mondo* (New World). The right-wing newspapers were: *Rivolta ideale* (Ideal Revolt), *Tradizione* (Tradition), *Il faro* (the Lighthouse or Beacon), and *Occidente* (the West or Western civilization).

Reading these newspapers today, one gets the impression that they were written in a remote era. The socio-political reality that generated these publications has been radically altered on both sides of the ocean. As a consequence of the recent disintegration of the communist system, which ended over seventy years of East/West confrontational tension, in Italy the party system to which these newspapers refer no longer exists. Parties bearing new names and advancing new policies have replaced the older ones, marking what is now considered the passage from the first to the second Republic.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the articles on, or about, Italian politics published

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<sup>2</sup>For example, on the left, the strong, monolithic Italian Communist Party has a new name, *Partito dei democratici di sinistra* (DS); and, more importantly, it has a democratic structure and a reformist political platform. Two smaller splinter parties, *Rifondazione comunista* (RC) and *Comunisti democratici italiani* (CI),

in the newspapers in question have no reference at all to the present political nomenclature.

Although the Italian Canadian radical periodicals do not refer to the new political nomenclature, their pages reflect, perhaps better than the widely circulating commercial newspapers such as *Corriere canadese*, the double process that occurred in Italy and among the local Italian communities in the years in question. The constant evolution in the Italian political landscape inside and outside the political parties gave rise to debates, conflicts, and divisions among the Italian Canadian militants, leading to

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still allude to a defunct era. Even the neo fascist MSI (*Movimento Sociale Italiano*), the ideological and political heir of the second Fascism (the Fascism which dominated Mussolini's *Repubblica sociale italiana* [RSI] of Salò, from September 1943 to April 1945) has changed its name and repudiated its past. In the Congress of Fiuggi (1995), its leader Gianfranco Fini, a smooth and shrewd politician, had the party's name changed to *Alleanza nazionale* (AN) and turned the page on old and new fascism and its "infamous" anti-Semitism. He went so far as to state that "antifascism was an essential moment historically for the return of democracy in Italy;" and in his 2003 state visit to Israel, deputy Prime Minister Fini courageously stated that the RSI was a negative experience and defined Fascism as an "absolute evil." These changes have led the ex-neo-fascists from the isolation in which they had been confined since 1960 to both centre-right governments of Premier Silvio Berlusconi of our day.

In the political centre, under the scrutiny of the judicial inquest "*Mani pulite*" (clean hands) on the collusion between government and business, the once glorious Socialist Party dissolved; and so did the largest Italian Party, *Democrazia cristiana*, which was sarcastically referred to as "*la balena*" (the whale), alluding to its electoral strength. From their ashes new parties have emerged: *Forza Italia* (FI), led by the media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, the UDC (*Unione democratici cristiani*), leaning to the right; and the *Partito della margherita* (PM), leaning to the left.

Moreover, from the crisis of the first Italian Republic, two brand-new parties have been founded: the strong *Lega nord* (Northern League) of Umberto Bossi; and the small party *Italia dei valori* of the ex-magistrate Antonio Di Pietro. Bossi and his *Lega nord* (LN) postulate an ambiguous policy, a mesh of succession, federalism, fiscal autonomy, and a good dose of racism, while *Italia dei valori* continues the ethical battle that its leader Di Pietro, a Magistrate of "Mani pulite", had waged against corruption. Although the Italian political landscape has always been crowded with a myriad of local parties, as a result of all these changes from 1994 to the present, Italy today is dominated by two political coalitions: the centre-right *Casa della libertà* (Home of freedom), grouping FI and its three smaller allies, AN, LN, and UDC; and the center-left *Ulivo* (Olive tree), grouping DS, PM, Green Party, Socialists and others.

changes in political and ideological orientations: different ideological positions led to the succession of one newspaper by another and, in the case of the local communists, caused the parallel publication of two periodicals that represented opposing political lines.

Within the local Italian communities, moreover, it is evident that the interest of some of these publications shifted from carrying predominantly Italian news and reports to stressing local community and Canadian content, even using English in order to reach second generation Canadian-born Italians. This is particularly true of the left-wing newspapers, although even the right-wing publications registered a shift from abstract, theoretical questions to relevant political issues of the day and eventually turned to the use of English, as we shall see below.

### Left-wing papers<sup>3</sup>

From the second half of the 1940s and throughout the 1950s and '60s, the Italian population in Canada swelled by almost seven hundred per cent as the following table shows:

	1941	1951	1961	1971
Italian origin	112,625	152,245	450,351	730,82
Mother tongue Italian	80,269	92,244	339,626	538,360

In 1971, over 59% of the Italian population in Canada or 432,425 was concentrated in the Metropolitan city of Toronto: 271,755 were in the Toronto city core and the rest in the surrounding townships: York West 41,665, York East 6,545, Etobicoke 23,480, North York 73,495 and Scarborough 15,485.<sup>4</sup> Emigration from Italy slowed down considerably after 1971.

Most immigrants from Italy were agricultural workers and tradespeople displaced from a rural economy that was in shambles after the devasta-

<sup>3</sup>The reader must be aware of the ongoing debate on the validity of the dichotomy of left and right in describing today's politics since the political platforms of the many contending parties inevitably invade each other's territory. However, Norberto Bobbio (*Destra e sinistra*, pp. 7-8) is right when he argues that the distinction between right and left does not exclude at all the configuration of an interrupted line from extreme left to extreme right or vice versa that is the same thing, implying the existence of many shades of right and many shades of left. In our case, furthermore, the distinction between left and right is marked on different levels: ideological, political, and practical.

<sup>4</sup>For the figures regarding Canada see *Historical Statistics of Canada*, A125-163 and A185-237; for the Toronto Italian population see, *Census Tract Bulletin*, 1971, 2, 16, 18, 26, and 32.

tion of the Second World War. A survey of 100 Italian men conducted by the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto (IIMT) in the years 1962-64 reveals that, before emigrating, 43 of the 100 men surveyed had worked in agriculture, 29 had been construction workers, and 7 had been general labourers. The remaining 22 men had practised a variety of trades as barbers, bakers, tailors, and cabinetmakers.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the formal education of those surveyed was well below Canadian standards. Not all Italian immigrants had completed the five-year basic schooling program that was the norm in Italy until 1955; in fact, some older men and women had no schooling at all.<sup>6</sup> Because of their limited education and lack of proficiency in English, most Italians were engaged in difficult and dangerous jobs in the construction industry and provided other type of manual labour for which they were paid much less than the going rates. Unscrupulous employers exploited them, cheating them of their vacation-pay, unemployment insurance stamps, and hours of pay, and some employers even demanded as a condition for employment a portion of the pay cheque in the form of a kickback. This was particularly prevalent in the construction industry.<sup>7</sup> Pierre Berton, journalist and historian, described the terrible conditions in which most Italian workers lived in the 1960s in a series of three articles published by the *Toronto Star*. In summing up his articles he wrote:

The Italians are walled off from the rest of us, partly by language, partly by cultural background, partly by the terrible struggle to survive which leaves them time for very little—but also because the government and the various social agencies have shown little real inclination to reach out to them ... Nor have the wealthy Italian contractors, so eager to exploit their own countrymen, done much for the Italian community.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ferguson, *Newcomers in Transition*, 44-45.

<sup>6</sup>The table below (Ferguson, *Newcomers in Transition*, 41, Table 18) shows the education levels of Italian immigrants.

	5+ years	5 years	4 years	3 years	2 years	1 year	none
100 men	9	47	19	7	6	0	5
100 women	5	26	16	11	7	1	12

(Information was not available for 7 men and 22 women)

<sup>7</sup>See Principe, "Two Years of Social Unrest; in Toppan, *The Voice of Labor*; Colantonio, *From the Ground Up*; Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*; Proceeding and report (Goldenberg Report).

<sup>8</sup>Berton, "How Italian Live."



The exploitation of Italian immigrant workers was so widespread and well known that it seems inconceivable that the commercial media serving the Italian community were not aware of it. The media, however, never attempted to make Italian workers aware of their rights, nor was resistance against exploitation encouraged. Frightened by the paranoid witch-hunt unleashed by American Senator McCarthy's "Inquiry on Un-American Activities" which still lingered in the community, Italian Canadian leaders considered every voice speaking about workers' problems and against the status quo to be inspired by communists. The media, in turn, served as ideological mirrors and voices of the community leaders. Such was the context in which the early Italian Canadian left-wing radical publications were conceived and generated.

The first political paper to appear in Toronto after the Second World War was *Il lavoratore*. Through its title the editors intended to link it with the pre-war homonymous socialist paper published in Toronto in 1936-37.<sup>9</sup> A group of newcomers, socialists, and communists of the Antonio Gramsci Club appalled at the way in which the community mass media dealt with workers' issues, founded the new *Il lavoratore* and established a collective editorial board consisting of Jack Capitanio, Tommaso D'Ambrogio, Matteo Federico, Michele Gallo (who created the masthead), Remigio Peghin, Franco Ranieri, Bruno Tutino, Ernesto Valentini, myself, and few others. *Il lavoratore* was a class-conscious paper and, in some ways, a sectarian and moderate one at the same time. It was sectarian in so far as it was directed to manual workers only; but its political platform was moderate. It encouraged workers to become interested in social issues and in the union movement.

From its first issue, *Il lavoratore* firmly made two points. "Before you begin to read this newspaper," the first editorial reads, "we would like to say something confidentially: look at your hands. If they are the hands of an honest worker [...], if you have calloused hands, keep on reading it. This is your paper." Then, having warned its readers, and Italian Canadian workers in general, not to fall into the trap of patriotic nostalgia—a sentiment that was fostered by the community commercial media—the editorial continued:

Workers [...] should take interest in the [...] problems related to their jobs. They should discuss them, analyse them factually and then express their opinion honestly and without fear. Whatever their opinion might be, it is preferable to mental castration or to a lie that sinks man to the level of beasts

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<sup>9</sup>Principe, "The Italo-Canadian Anti-Fascist Press," 127-131.

ANNO II — NUMERO 10

"THE WORKER"

SETTEMBRE 1940 — 10 CENT

# L'AZIONE SINDACALE IN TORONTO

Il compendio dei fattori connessi allo sciopero degli addetti alle costruzioni in Toronto è noto: «non valere» ha più «coertere» nella comune volontà dei lavoratori di origine italiana e non italiana, di porre fine ad uno stato di cose intollerabile agli effetti della demoralizzazione e della dignità umana.

Le origini del vasto movimento di masse operaie dell'industria edile in Toronto sulle dipiazze "organizzate" e disorganizzate, vanno ricercate le sono ed anni da poco super-tramontati, di asprità della vita altrui, da parte di numerosi datori di lavoro che all'impossibilità di averne il prodotto, sottoponevano in sempre grado l'ignoranza più grezza del vilissimo ripudio.

Parallelamente a questo, si è da considerare anche il forte scontro sociale esistente durante tutto questo tempo, contro i nuovi immigrati da molti sindacati, i cui dirigenti nel chiedere, anzi i più infanti, prima la porta ai nuovi sindacati, hanno dimostrato un loro saggiata astensione in materia di sindacalismo. Però, non i mai fatti per imparare, soprattutto per quella specie di sindacalismo che considerava il mondo intero ai confini del nord-americano e il denaro (troppi) che entra nelle loro tasche settimanalmente, come preferenza di diritto ai loro nervosi occasionali, che si sono dignità di occuparsi (frequentemente in mala fede) della lotta degli interessi dei lavoratori.

Come se un fatto non fosse stato che le masse lavoratrici assistono la loro pressione, ma mai come si acquistano sempre più coscienza di se stesse, che dei loro bisogni e dei loro diritti, e dimostrano per esempio da questa settimana in un comitato che deve volgere di tempo nel campo dell'edilizia.

Circa un anno fa, riflettendo lo stato d'animo dei nuovi immigrati della categoria muratori, il sindacalista Bruno Lanni tentò di organizzare questi lavoratori entro un nuovo sindacato fuori del C.I.C. (Canadian Labour Congress). Il tentativo che avrebbe dovuto essere una specie di sindacato dialettico fallì.

Il 17 Marzo 1940, cinque nuovi lavoratori immigrati dagli Italia, pervennero irrispettando il cadavere del Toronto High/Low/Low Tunnell project.

La lettera "lancina" ebbe l'effetto repressivo, particolarmente tra le masse della comunità italiana e le varie razzie di lavoratori che ne scaturirono tra le quali, come i nostri lettori ricorderanno, quella avvenuta sotto gli auspici di "IL LAVORATORE" nei locali di 309 Bathurst Street, mentre si discuteva la determinazione unanime di proteggere i diritti e le condizioni lavorative nel campo della costruzione edile.

Con il passar dei giorni la pressione dei lavoratori «comuni» andò diminuendo, la stampa quotidiana, la radio e la televisione, comunicavano ad intervalli della

cosa, sfortunatamente intermettendo solo alcuni presunti "leaders" della comunità italiana, che si rivelarono effettivamente per quello che sono, cioè, alla dipendenza della prostituzione mafiosa locale.

Il signor Bruno Lanni ed un altro sindacalista, il signor Charles Irvine, vice-presidente responsabile per il Canada della "International Plasterers and Lathers' Mason Union" (questa volta associarono con successo la formazione di nuovi centri sindacali (locali) in quattro o cinque mestieri conosciuti con il fronte della costruzione di case e appartamenti).

I lavoratori, interessati in un'opera di unione italiana ma anche di altre nazionalità, accorsero a migliaia e fu così iniziato un grande sciopero, durato 13 giorni: per andare gli ottuli costruttori e costruttori a vedere nuove condizioni di lavoro per i loro dipendenti, sul modello dei sindacati esistenti da vecchia data (Quarantenni) di cui uno degli esponenti, il Me, fu il più attivo. Ma loro dovevano evitare le azioni primariamente e da moltissimo tempo, rimasero immortali nella comoda posizione di "Inestituti".

La solidarietà degli scopieri e stuccatori, che da un tempo le emporie della storia del movimento operaio di Toronto. Tutte le loro nuove attività messe in opera da padroni per dividere la compattezza dei lavoratori barono vane e vennero sempre "impervamente" demoralizzate agli organi direttivi dello sciopero ed espone all'opinione pubblica. Lo sciopero a nostra disprezzione non fu consentito di elevarsi su una qualche questione importante e non per un certo caso di spinti sindacati.

Nei giorni dello sciopero "IL LAVORATORE" (edizione n. 3, Lullie) Aprile 1940) contenente l'articolo di fondo "Vincere lo Sciopero" fu gratuitamente distribuito agli scopieri, nascondendo qualche interesse e apprensione negli stessi periodi. "Building Trade C.I.O." del Partito Comunista del Canada, rivolse un vivente appello ai vecchi sindacati affidati "quelli" apostrofici in parte garantendo ai nuovi immigrati l'eguaglianza nel lavoro: le parti sotto consiglio gli scopieri per l'azione intrapresa escludendo massime l'azione d'ogni tipo, il coesistenza dell'articolo "Una Contrattazione" apparso sul loro giornale di fabbrica "The Builder" (edizione n. 2, 17 Agosto 1940) Tale giornale aveva distribuito la parimente anche tra i lavoratori canadesi.

Lo sciopero raggiunse la sua conclusione vittoriosa al termine del periodo precedentemente citato e furono anche visti: lotta sindacale in addizionali settori dove la reazione padronale si era manifestata per un periodo di tempo.

Le riunioni per il gruppo di sindacati di categoria partecipanti alla manifestazione furono tenute in questo segue:

a) Pura operaia maggioranza di massa per le ore di lavoro settimanali lavorative di 40 ore, sulla base di 1 ore giornaliere da lunedì a Venerdì. (Fattore eccezionale di integrazione, cioè "plasterers" che ricevevano dopo paga per il lavoro eventuale).

Avviso mensile di Sabato e Domenica e il manuale di settimana lavorativa e fissata in 3 ore giornaliere per un totale di 40 ore settimanali).

b) Muratori: paga oraria dal 1 Settembre 1940 \$2.40, dal 30 Settembre 1940 \$2.60, dal 1 Dicembre 1940 \$2.80, dal 1 Marzo 1941, \$3.00.

c) Carpentieri: paga oraria dal 1 ottobre 1940, \$2.80, dal 1 Aprile 1941, \$3.00, dal 1 Febbraio 1941, \$3.20.

d) Cementisti: paga oraria dal 1 Ottobre 1940 \$2.80, dal 1 Dicembre 1940 \$3.00, dal 1 Febbraio 1941, \$3.20, dal 1 Aprile 1941, \$3.40.

e) Manovali: paga oraria dal 1 Ottobre 1940 \$1.60, dal 1 Dicembre 1940 \$1.75, dal 1 Marzo 1941 \$1.90, dal 1 Maggio 1941, \$2.00.

f) Intonaco: paga oraria in vigore \$3.08.

Dopo gli avvenimenti descritti, anche i vecchi sindacati del "Building Trade Council" uscì la prima sessione unitaria dei loro iscritti nella forma di un patto per organizzare i disorganizzati, e svolse varie azioni sindacali che hanno portato alla stipulazione di nuovi contratti di lavoro in vari settori.

Nella conferenza di Toronto, la sezione "ANTONIO GRAMSCI" del Partito Comunista del Canada ha distribuito un manifesto dal titolo "Proletariato e Azione" che invita a proseguire la lotta per la piena conquista della democrazia in tutti i campi di lavoro e sotto ogni punto di vista.

Oggi la situazione lavorativa in Toronto, a prescindere dalle violenze sindacali finora commesse dai lavoratori, presenta gravi aspetti.

Alle soglie dell'apertura di nuovo dei disoccupati non solo ha superato i livelli massimi registrati negli Stati Uniti negli ultimi anni, ma in continuo peggioramento. Tale situazione si estende anche su scala nazionale.

Il governo dei conservatori, che per bocca del Primo Ministro Macdonald ha preso, disse, come la campagna elettorale, pensa occupazione, sta invece ritalando fedelmente le orme della sua precedente esibizione 1930 l'anno della crisi, non potrebbe essere altrimenti quando si va intesa a basarsi sulla politica capitalista degli strumenti agli ordini dell'imperialismo massimale, al punto di perseguire sistematicamente quella della pace mondiale e della neutralità canadese che porrebbe alla soluzione dei problemi del popolo ed, innanzi in primo luogo la pace della disoccupazione.

I contratti di lavoro della vecchia e nuova "locali" sindacali scadevano nel 1941 e da allora ritornò a nuovo avviso, che l'unità sul fronte del lavoro ha mantenuto ed è implata al più alto grado, sempre sotto pressione con successo la lotta per il conseguimento di nuove vittorie nel prossimo anno. Tra queste, la più importante è la riduzione della settimana lavorativa da 40 ore alla stessa paga percepita in precedenza, e una delle basi essenziali sulle quali poggia il progresso sociale e il diritto al lavoro per tutti.

LEGGETELO  
ABBONATEVI  
DIFFONDETVELO

## L'Udienza Alla "Royal Commission On Industrial Safety"

La "Royal Commission on Industrial Safety" nazionale, il Comitato Korm della Ontario Legislature (Parlamento dell'Ontario) in data 16 Settembre u.s. ha udito "IL LAVORATORE" rappresentato dal responsabile per il comitato editoriali, Ernesto Valentini, presentare e discutere punti chiave di un documento riguardante la protezione contro gli infortuni sul lavoro, particolarmente nel campo della costruzione edile.

La protesta dell'opinione pubblica sulla tragedia quanto inosservanza morale di cinque giovani lavoratori italiani, avvenuta il 17 Marzo c.s. nel cantiere di Toronto dell'High/Low/Low Tunnell Project, costruite il Governo della Provincia dell'Ontario a stabilire la suddetta Royal Commission.

Come i nostri lettori ricorderanno, il 3 Aprile 1940 circa 40 lavoratori (in maggioranza italiani) si riunirono nella sala di 309 Bathurst Street in Toronto, per commemorare e protestare la tragica scomparsa di questi cinque giovani, causata dall'interesse per maggior profitto di una compagnia d'appalto, fuori dei suoi datori, che spingeva il lavoro al massimo dell'accelerazione.

In tale circostanza, E. Valentini, in qualità di presidente della riunione, fu ascoltato dai partecipanti e inoltre presso competenti autorità, le risoluzioni scaturite dal dibattito ed a provate dall'assemblea. Di conseguenza si ebbe l'invio dei seguenti documenti:

— Al Governo Federale (nella democratizzazione delle leggi sull'immigrazione).

— Al Toronto Labour Council (nell'urgente bisogno dei lavoratori immigrati di entrare a far parte dei sindacati con pieno stato di egualianza).

— Al Governo Provinciale dell'Ontario (principalmente sulla protezione contro gli infortuni sul lavoro).

Il Premier Frost dell'Ontario espresse interesse nella riunione e nelle proposte ad essa accolte, concludendo la sua lettera di risposta con le seguenti parole: «vi assicuriamo che la mia massima considerazione sarà data alla vostra lettera».

Poco tempo dopo, quando venne stabilita la Royal Commission, fu inoltrato il seguente documento:

Ernesto Valentini, Chairman, Italo-Canadian (Toronto) Workers Protective Association c/o "IL LAVORATORE" 1164 Dundas St. West, Toronto, Ont.

To the Royal Commission on Industrial Safety (Province of Ontario)

The Honourable P. S. McAndrew, Chairman

Dear Sirs:

On April 8, 1940 under my signature as Chairman, a public meeting of Toronto Italo-Canadians presented a resolution to Prime Minister L. Frost which inter alia included recommendations regarding industrial safety measures, especially as regards immigrant workers and, in particular, construction workers.

The above committee, established by the above mentioned public meeting, has instructed me to forward the pertinent proposals that are being submitted for your consideration.

(a) Improve present safety laws especially for the construction industry, and ensure much stricter enforcement thereof.

(b) Adopt a "clear-cut" policy of granting provincial work contracts only to Companies which adhere strictly to maximum safety conditions and union wages and conditions of work.

(c) Adopt the practice of having posted in Italian (and all non-English, non-French language where such may apply) at places.

(Cont. a pag. 8, col. 1)

## LA STATISTICA

Sai che? la statistica? "E' na cosa che serve pe' fa' un conto in generale de la gente che nasce, che sta male, che muore, che va in carcere e che sposa.

Ma pe' me la statistica curiosa e' che c'entra la perentoria, pe' via che, il, la media e' sempre esuale puro co' la persona buonasina.

Me spiego: da li conti che se fanno secondo le statistiche d'addio assunta che te tocca un paio all'anno.

e, se non entra ne le spese tue, c'entra ne la statistica lo stesso perché c'è un altro che se magna due.

TRILLUSA

and is therefore unworthy of the democratic freedom that Canada grants to everybody.<sup>10</sup> [Translations mine unless otherwise indicated.]

As a paper published by socialists and communists, *Il lavoratore* did not align itself politically with the democratic socialist Canadian

<sup>10</sup> *Il lavoratore*, (Dec, 1958-Jan. 1959): 1.

Commonwealth Federation (CCF) to which the socialists leaned, or to the Canadian Progressive Party (the communist party) to which the Gramsci Club belonged. However, it expounded a policy in defence of manual workers in general, explaining the role and functions of labour unions in society, and defending Italians against discrimination and exploitation. With its stand against the status quo, *Il lavoratore* may have anticipated the construction workers' militancy, which led to the formation of the Brandon Union Group and the strikes of 1960 and 1961, the two most militant and, at times, even violent strikes of the post-war labour movement in the construction industry in Toronto. These strikes prompted Toronto's daily newspapers, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Daily Star*, and the *Telegram* in particular, to switch their interest from national issues to the problems of the humble Italian construction workers. They exposed case after case of exploitation, abuse, and maltreatment to which non-unionised workers were subjected in the construction industry.<sup>11</sup>

Accidents on the job were common events in the 1950s and '60s. *Il lavoratore* spoke loudly against what its editors considered a general lack of interest by unions, government, and the public. When, on 17 March 1960, five men (Guido Mantella, Alessandro Mantella, John Correggio, John Fusillo and Pasquale Allegrezza) died in the collapse of the Hogg's Hollow tunnel while working on the construction of the Yonge Street Subway, *Il lavoratore* published the following editorial:

On the construction sites, heaps of crosses indicate the price Italian workers have paid so that some contractors can build their fortunes rapidly. The Yonge Street accident is the last straw.

Many Italians, too many die on the job. Every time an accident occurs there is an investigation which, when it is not a palliative, leaves things as they are. Even this time they say there will be one to discover who is ultimately responsible. And to what end? The real issue is not to vindicate those five men by charging one or more responsible individuals.

The real question is much more serious. It is time to provide safety on the job to the thousands of working men who, judging by the daily accidents and deaths, risk their lives for a meagre wage every day. Therefore, there is no point in pretending to do something by calling for an inquiry and then closing the case. There is a need for strict new laws against those contractors who do not implement every necessary measure to prevent accidents on the job. And every time one is found guilty he should be

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<sup>11</sup> Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 154-196; Principe, "Two Years of Social Unrest," 9-11; Colantonio, *From the Ground Up*, 94-113 and 121-148; Toppan, *The Voice of Labor*, 55-58.

punished with the full force of the law to make him and those like him understand that no one is above the law.<sup>12</sup>

Moving from the editorial to action, *Il lavoratore* organized a public meeting on 3 April 1960 to commemorate and protest the tragic deaths at Hogg's Hollow. At the heated meeting a resolution was passed and sent to the Premier of Ontario, Leslie Frost, and a Workers' committee was elected to pursue the matter. Part of that resolution was also mailed to the Honourable P.S. McAndrew, who chaired the Royal Commission on Industrial Safety. It made six recommendations:

1) Improve present Safety Laws [...] and insure much stricter enforcement thereof.

2) Improve and strengthen the enforcement of provincial laws on Minimum Wages, Vacation Pay, Transportation to and from Work, Sanitary Facilities, Hours of Work Act, etc...

3) [Grant] provincial work contracts only to Companies, which adhere strictly to maximum safety conditions and union wages...

4) Amend the Fair Employment Practices Act to guaranty no discrimination for political adherence or union activities ...

5) Adopt practice of having posted in Italian (and other non-English, non-French languages) ... pertinent labour legislation and Safety regulations ...

6) Make it obligatory for Safety Inspectors ... [to] be proficient in [other languages], or have interpreters with them when covering industries where a considerable section of employees are non-English speaking.<sup>13</sup>

Upon receiving the brief, the Commission Chairman invited the president of the Workers' committee, Ernesto Valentini, to attend one of the Commission hearings. *Il lavoratore* was, moreover, probably the only Italian Canadian newspaper to expound a policy of salary equity for women in the 1950s and '60s. It advocated that, "Unions must consider the problem of equal salary for women in all sectors of industry a task of primary importance. They must enforce this in each plant and factory."<sup>14</sup>

For the first issues, *Il lavoratore* was a very modest publication of 12 magazine-size pages; in 1960 it became a four-page tabloid. In its modest dress, it had a circulation of over 1,000 copies, a notable success for the time, considering the means then at the disposal of the publishers: 250 copies were sent to Montreal, Quebec, 100 copies to British Columbia, some to the Niagara peninsula and other Ontario towns, and over 500

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<sup>12</sup>*Il lavoratore* (March 1960): 1.

<sup>13</sup>*Il lavoratore* (September 1960): 1-2.

<sup>14</sup>*Il lavoratore* (November 1959): 8.



copies were distributed in Toronto. In the cold war atmosphere, the paper, with its anti status quo stance, was like a breath of fresh air in a stale atmosphere. However, it alarmed the prominent leaders of the Italian community: the *Corriere canadese* attacked it; priests excommunicated it; the Italian consular authorities kept it at bay; and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) kept the editors under surveillance.

On 18 April 1959 the *Corriere canadese* wrote: "For about two years in Toronto, it was rumoured that a communist paper in Italian was going to be published [...] after long and secret preparations, last week some hundred copies of a newspaper that calls itself *Il lavoratore* were distributed [...] The comrades however remained within the law." At least one priest of St. Agnes Church warned some of his parishioners of the danger that the communist paper posed to young people. The Italian Consulate blacklisted the editors. And several persons who were involved with *Il lavoratore*, including the author of this article, were denied Canadian citizenship until the Citizenship Act was amended in 1969.<sup>15</sup>

These hostile conditions, along with the conflicting viewpoints of the socialists and communists on the editorial board of the paper, made every issue a struggle and brought about the demise of *Il lavoratore* at the end of 1961. This local ideological conflict coincided with the creation of the centre-left government of the Christian Democracy and the Italian Socialist Party in Italy, which marked the diverging policy of the two working class parties, the communists and socialists. The same year, the creation in Canada of the New Democratic Party (NDP) induced the nucleus of Italian socialists who had been involved with *Il lavoratore* to organize themselves in the *Associazione Democratica Italo-canadese* (ADI) in competition with the above-mentioned communist Gramsci club. This nucleus soon grew to over one hundred persons. Their task was to establish the new party in the Italian community. Patiently and with years of involvement in the community and in several provincial and federal elections and bi-elections, they contributed significantly to the creation of the conditions which led to the election of four Italian Canadian NDP members in the 1975 Ontario election as we will see.

The socialists' first step to making the NDP known in the community was the publication of *La parola*, a modest sixteen-page, magazine-size monthly bulletin, with a circulation of about 400, mostly in Toronto. Its editorial board consisted of Sandra Gourley (a social worker), Rocco Mastrangelo (a teacher), Giuseppe Mazzotta (a student), Giovanni

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<sup>15</sup>*Corriere canadese* (18 April 1959): 4.



Sinicropi (a professor of Italian literature at the University of Toronto), and myself (editor). The first issue appeared in May 1963. The importance of the paper lies in the fact that it presented overtly socialist ideas in the community, which had been conditioned to fear the word "socialism." It also discussed workers' issues that were ignored or downplayed by the dominant *Corriere canadese*, which at that time unofficially supported the Progressive Conservative Party.<sup>16</sup> Presenting their objective, the Italian socialist supporters of the NDP wrote,

Italian workers should organize themselves [...] in defence of their rights [...] by accepting the platform of the New Democratic Party. [...] A government program of social reforms as we want it, and with us the true majority of the country, should be seen neither as concessions, nor as the result of progress, platonically intended. But, more concretely, the reforms should be considered as workers' rightful conquests.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to news and articles on the various facets of NDP policy and on the ADI's organizational drive, *La parola* discussed different aspects of the Italian community's economic, social, and cultural life. The serious issues most often discussed were the endemic problems: accidents on the job and the protection of construction workers. *La parola* urged citizens, unions, and government to address and find a solution for these issues. Echoing an editorial that had been published in *Il lavoratore* five years before, *La parola* wrote:

In spite of the oral commitment of the Minister of Labour and his Ministry assistant, this year [1963], more than any other year, there has been a very high number of fatal accidents on construction sites: 53. In addition to the loss of 53 lives, accidents have sent hundreds of our nationals to hospitals with broken backs.

The lives of those 53 workers demand that this gangrenous problem be solved [...] now. It is time for Magistrates to speak with the authority of Justice, and to say no loudly to this criminal shame! [...] It is imperative that we open our eyes to the fact that people die daily. [...] We do not want to soil rubble with our brains and blood nor to have our heart squeezed against a brick. The time to vent our rage is now.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup>In the early 1960s, three elected conservatives were regular collaborators of the paper: Quinto Martino, MP for Hamilton; Alan Grossman, MPP for Belwoods in Toronto; and Joe Piccinini, Toronto councilor. In the 1965 Federal Election, Dan Iannuzzi, editor of the paper, was the Progressive Conservative candidate in the Davenport riding in Toronto.

<sup>17</sup>*La parola* 1:7 (Nov. 1963):3.

<sup>18</sup>*La parola* 1:6 (1963): 3.

VOL. 1

SETT. 1963

No. 6

# La Parola

A SSOCIAZIONE

D EMOCRATICA

I TALO-CANADESE



EDITO A CURA DEL COMITATO ESECUTIVE DELL'  
A. D. I.

Besides the work-related issues plaguing the community, *La parola* tackled social and cultural matters as well. In the November 1963 issues, Giuseppe Mazzotta exposed the alienation of Italian immigrants who, wrapped up in their nostalgia for an Italy that never was, sought evasion in illusory pseudo-artistic activities. In an article titled "Chi siamo noi italiani che viviamo a Toronto?" (Who are we Italians living in Toronto?) Mazzotta

explained the prevalent nostalgia as a form of alienation in these words: "One of the most important phenomena that we have noted in the last few years is the large number of Italians, women and men, young and old, who pose as writers 'in pectore,' poets 'in pectore,' singers 'in pectore,' and soccer players 'in pectore,'" He then examines a song, "*Emigrato abbandonato*" (abandoned emigrant) by Luciano Salvatore and a film *Accadde in Canada* (It happened in Canada), possibly the first film ever produced and directed by an Italian Canadian, Luigi Petrucci.

With respect to the song, Mazzotta noted, "besides the obvious and consistent grammatical mistakes, the verses express the author's nostalgia for Italy. In a rudimentary manner, Italy is identified with the obvious image of '*oh sole mio*' and Canada with the image of 'cold.'" Then he continued, "In its highest lyrical point, the poet expresses the hope that the metaphorical cold, which is both sentimental and moral, will one day end." In reviewing the film, Mazzotta gave the reader an idea of both the story and of its low artistic level: "Petrucci was able to create a sense of expectation in the society at large that, in matters of creative activities, is 'terra desolata' (waste land). [...] Though the film presents situations from everyday life—the death on the job of an Italian worker and the pathetic mishaps of a lonely girl—the film did not touch the core problem: the rhythm of life in an opulent society replete with contradictions, egoisms, tensions." Mazzotta concluded his review with the following statement, "What might have been the archetypal story of conflicting cultures (the relation between Canadians and Italians, [...]) was in fact [...] monotonous: as if the characters were all anemic. Further, the film is marked by an exaggerated opening and closing of doors and publicity for O'Keefe [Brewers]."<sup>19</sup>

Another important issue tackled by *La parola* was the scandalous display of the Italian monarchist flag during official national celebrations of the Italian Republic. In 1963, during the 4th of November Victory Day commemoration of the Great War, the Italian monarchist flag was displayed at the entrance of the church of St. Mary of the Angels in Toronto. There, attended by the Italian ambassador and the local consul, a mass was celebrated to commemorate the fallen soldiers. A photograph of the incriminating flag was taken and published in the November issue of *La parola*. Under the photograph, the caption reads, "even this year, as in the preceding years, the Italian flag with the Sabauda cross was displayed at the entrance of the church of St. Mary of the Angels where a mass, attended

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<sup>19</sup>*La parola* 1.7 (Nov. 1963): 10.

by the representatives of the Republic of Italy, the Ambassador and the Consul, was celebrated. That flag offended the martyrs and the plebiscite of 2 June 1946.”<sup>20</sup> The flag has never again reappeared.

In the precarious conditions of those pioneer days, the editorial group disintegrated and *La parola*, after just more than a year, ceased publication. The men and women involved in it were called to other urgent and personal necessities: employment, studies, and change of residence. The ADI, however, continued its organizational work and activities with the injured workers and the unemployed; it even presented a brief to the federal Commission on Bilingualism.

Between the demise of *La parola* and the birth of *Forze nuove*, another publication involved a group of young Italian Canadians: it was the weekly *La carota*. The first issue, a semi goliardic editorial initiative, appeared on 4 January 1969.<sup>21</sup> It was a very modest publication, six partly typewritten and partly handwritten letter-size pages copied with a rudimentary duplicating machine and stapled together. Some issues, however, were much larger: n. 37 (24 November 1969), for example, was twenty pages thick. Its sarcastic name *La carota*, its untidy appearance, and its colloquial language constituted a strong political statement that suited well both the largely disoriented Italian immigrant community and the charged atmosphere of student unrest at the time. They also served to highlight the social problems within the community and the increasing world tension between East and West.

Published by the Italian section of the country-wide Company of Young Canadians (CYC), *La carota* was edited by a group of young women and men, who frequented the CYC Community Centre, located at 1725 Dufferin Street, just North of St. Clair Avenue, including: Antonio Amico, Roberto Bandiera, Maria Grifone (Italian Women Organization), Rick Slye, Bets Slye, Mario Micucci (a teacher), Leopoldo Bertacchi, (Steel

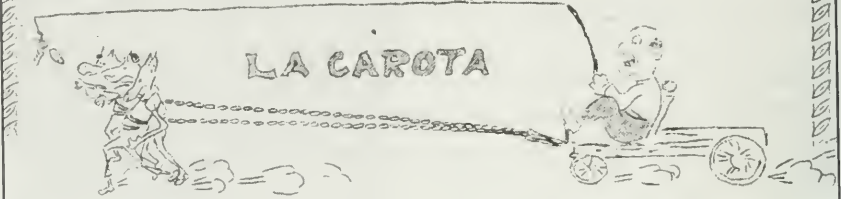
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<sup>20</sup>*La parola* 1.7 (Nov. 1963): 9.

<sup>21</sup>Roberto Bandiera, one of the most active members of the CYC Italian group, emailed the following message to me: “Ho letto con interesse il tuo giudizio sulla *Carota* e mi rendo conto che hai azzeccato in pieno per quanto riguarda lo spirito che teneva uniti quei giovani che, fra le tante cose, pubblicarono anche *La carota*. Voglio precisare che il primissimo numero anziché *La Carota*, fu chiamato *Comunità viva* ed uscì verso la fine di Ottobre del 1968 quando ancora eravamo (CYC) su Edwin [Street]. A fine Novembre del '68 ci spostammo su Dufferin ed entrò a far parte del gruppo anche Domenico Pagnini. Si decise di cambiare nome. Io suggerivo “Il Pungolo” e Domenico *La carota*. A me stava bene anche *La carota* per cui andammo avanti con quel nome [...]”

January 4th, 1969

#1



EDITORIALE

E' noto, che la comunita' italiana in Toronto e' priva di ogni centro culturale ed e' comune opinione che tale deficienza sia dovuta alla mancanza di un centro dove incontrarci per promuovere attivita' che partono dal consueto tram tram del passato.

Che la comunita' italiana non abbia luoghi dove incontrarsi e' falso, esistono non solo luoghi ma associazioni che potrebbero e dovrebbero intraprendere azioni culturali, politiche e sociali che, per ragioni non difficili ad individuare questa funzione e attivita' mai vennero iniziate. Tutti, compresi noi, siamo coscienti delle nostre deficienze e certamente non e' lusinghiero dover ammettere che per merito di pressioni da parte di non italiani il governo canadese sia stato spinto a tentare la ricostruzione sociale e morale dei nostri ghetti.

Circa un anno fa la CYC (Company of Young Canadians) mise a disposizione della comunita' una casa intera, del materiale e del personale con lo scopo di inniettare idee e generare attivita' tendenti a rompere il nostro isolamento; in altre parole, la societa' canadese attraverso il governo federale ci apre le porte e ci invita a diventare parte integrale di essa. Dopo un anno di attivita' questo invito ha dato ben pochi frutti, i pochi o molti che sono venuti a conoscenza o a contatto come attivita' della CYC sembra che abbiano capito ben poco e se si deve giudicare da quanto la stampa locale italiana ha scritto in merito si deve concludere che la comunita' e' contenta dello stato in cui si trova e rigetta ogni iniziativa tendente a rompere lo status quo. Tutti coloro che guardano alla CYC con diffidenza e' ben che si ravvedano, perche' la CYC non vuole ne' imporre ne' dirigere, ma aiutare tutti coloro che vogliono uscire dallo stato di non esistenza sociale in cui si trovano.

Fare un'analisi e giudicare quanto la CYC ha fatto fino ad ora non e' difficile, la sua azione e' stata negativa perche' e' riuscita a suscitare interesse solo fra un piccolo gruppo di giovani italo-canadesi. Dai primi di Dicembre, 1968 il centro della CYC si e' spostato nel centro della comunita' italiana ad ovest della citta'. Oltre a cio' sta' rivedendo le sue attivita' con la speranza di trovare mezzi e vie piu' coerenti per promuovere il dialogo fra la comunita' e la societa' canadese.

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Worker organizer), Olinio Capocchione, Domenico Pagnini (of the I.W.W.U.), Vince Gentile (of the A.M.C. & B. W.), Joe Tritto, and others. What held these young people together was not a common ideology but their youthful anti-conformist and iconoclastic views of the community.

*La carota's* first editorial was an indictment of those Italian Canadians who did not respond to the many appeals launched throughout 1968 by the CYC to get them involved in bettering the community and society at large. "After a long year of activities," the editors charged,



our appeals have borne little fruit. The people who heard about us or came in contact with the activities of the CYC have understood very little of our objectives. If we have to judge from what the local Italian press wrote about us, we ought to conclude that the community is content and it is against any initiative aimed at changing the status quo. All those people who mistrust the CYC should review their positions: the CYC does not want to impose or to lead, but only to help those who want to change the condition of their social passivity. [...] having essentially social objectives, the CYC aims at making every Italian Canadian who works, pays taxes, lives and dies in Canada understand that until he/she refuses to accept this reality he/she is a dead weight on those who struggle to create a more human society in Canada.<sup>22</sup>

From the barely legible pages of *La carota*, its outspoken editors censured the self-proclaimed leaders of the community. They supported with keen interest the union movement, explaining the difference between Syndicalism and Unionism or Italian and Canadian ways of organizing workers. For instance, a series of three unsigned articles on the Italians' involvement in the union movement give an interesting synthesis of the two epochal strikes conducted by the Brandon Union Group in 1960 and 1961.<sup>23</sup> The actual writer, Domenico Pagnini, described the two strikes as "belle e buone insurrezioni" (veritable insurrections), a definition partially shared by an important union leader like John Stefanini.<sup>24</sup> To stimulate the Italian community's interest in local and national problems, the activist editors of *La carota* organized debates and wrote articles on matters such as education, Workmen's Compensation, women and work, immigration, Mafia, integration and related topics. Further, Stanley Ryerson, a Marxist historian, gave a series of talks on Canadian history to the members of the group and to the public in general. There was a film club, and some of the activists on one occasion staged a light comedy.

Though critical of the self-proclaimed leaders of the Italian community, *La carota* defended John Lombardi when Tony O'Donohue accused Lombardi, and by implication the Italian community, of conducting Mafia-style deals. Lombardi had decided to run in Ward 3 as a candidate for the position of councilor in the 1969 municipal election. Later, changing his mind, he switched from Ward 3 to Ward 4 where O'Donohue was

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<sup>22</sup>*La carota* 1 (4 Jan. 1969): 1.

<sup>23</sup>*La carota* 1-3 (4, 11 & 18 Jan. 1969): 3-4, 3-4. Issue No. 3 is lacking in my collection (which, as far as I know, is the only extant collection of this weekly).

<sup>24</sup>John Stefanini defined the two strikes as "a peaceful revolution" in Bagnell, *Canadese*, 156.

a candidate. In this connection, *La carota* wrote:

We are the first to criticize our [Italian] candidates when we feel that they are unworthy of representing our community and the citizens in general. But, above all, now, we violently criticize a serious slander brought against our entire community. Commenting on John Lombardi's decision to switch wards, Tony O'Donohue said, this is a 'dirty affair', adding 'it recalls the days when, in the American cities, gangsters used to meet behind closed doors and divide the city as if it were a cake.' Tony O'Donohue's imbecile slander comments on itself: it is an imbecile's slander!<sup>25</sup>

*La carota* did not have a specific ideological orientation, but its iconoclastic attitude, youthful vivacity, and quasi-anarchist stand made its pages a singular reading in the left-wing Italian press in Canada. Following the demise of *La carota*, two other editorial enterprises on the democratic left ensued: *Forze nuove* (1972-1982) and *Avanti! Canada* (1975-76).

*Forze nuove* began as an election bulletin during the 1972 Federal Election in support of my campaign as the NDP candidate for the Davenport riding. After the election a group of members of the ADI "undertook to donate a small amount of money on a regular monthly basis in order to continue the publication of the paper." They were: Nivo Angelone, Elio Costa, Odoardo Di Santo, Tony Marcantonio, Matteo Matteotti, Domenico Leone, Angelo Delfino, Vince Gentile, myself, and others. After six issues, the monthly paper, a sixteen-page tabloid, was financially sound. The editorial board consisted of Elio Costa, Odoardo Di Santo, Tony Marcantonio and myself, remained relatively unchanged for the entire life of the paper, although other people joined for one, two, or more years and then left.<sup>26</sup> At first the editorial coordinator was Odoardo di Santo; then, for one year (1975-76), Franco Conte; and from 1976 on myself. Domenico Leone, Nivo Angelone, and Franco Lento, each in different

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<sup>25</sup>*La carota* 37, (24 Nov. 1969): 15.

<sup>26</sup>Some of these passing members were Maria Augimeri, Gerardo Cimillo, Amedeo Corridone, Angelo Delfino, Mario Esposito, Franca De Angelis, Celestino De Iuliis, Vince Gentile, Tony Grande, Francesco Guardiani, Tony Lupusella, Teresa Manduca, Tony Marcantonio, Domenico Pagnini. I apologize to those whose names I have forgotten. Luciana Marchionne and John Picchione collaborated on specific cultural problems. Provincial and Federal NDP Candidates, members of Parliament, and members of the Provincial Legislature contributed with articles, news, and communications throughout the life of the paper.

# FORZE NUOVE

ANNO IV - No. 5 e 6 - TORONTO

MENSILE POLITICO

156 - LUGLIO E AGOSTO 1975

## GIUGNALO CANADESI E LA POLITICA: di che abbiamo paura?

Per rispondere alla prima domanda bisogna innanzitutto chiarire che molti italiani-canadesi o i di interesse della vita politica o sono almeno degli che la loro partecipazione ed il loro contributo possono dirsi puramente simbolici. Si ha l'impressione che i nostri connazionali abbiano una innata diffidenza per tutto ciò che sa di politica anche se poi sappiamo che ciò non è vero dal momento che in Italia si può dire che non c'è un solo italiano che non sia coinvolto nella politica.

Il disinteresse degli italiani-canadesi va quindi ricercato altrove. Ed innanzitutto nella mancanza di coraggio che molti hanno di esporre le proprie idee apertamente. Teoricamente tutti sono in Canada c'è libertà di espressione e che ogni immigrato, diventato cittadino, ha tutti gli stessi obblighi e gli stessi diritti degli altri canadesi. In pratica, mentre si rispettano tutti gli obblighi, fino all'accettazione delle situazioni più gravose, finora non si è ancora riusciti a convincere gli italiani di usare anche i loro diritti.

Ed il fatto è che volenti o nolenti tutti SUBIAMO le decisioni prese a vario livello politico, immigrati o cittadini canadesi. Se il moltiplicarsi delle situazioni, nel DOBBIAMO pagare come gli altri Se Trudeau aumenta il prezzo delle benzine e dell'olio di riscaldamento noi DOBBIAMO pagare. Se il governo provinciale dell'Ontario di Bill Davis accresce il passivo del bilancio fino ad un miliardo e mezzo di dollari noi DOBBIAMO pagare.

Quali la politica di classe da difendere. Se ci ricordiamo direttamente dobbiamo cercare di comprendere come stanno le cose e che attendi a non farsi ingannare. Dobbiamo comprendere quali sono le forze politiche che rappresentano gli interessi dei lavoratori e delle classi produttive dell'economia e quali sono invece quelle che rappresentano gli interessi dei grossi padroni e delle classi parassitarie che purtroppo hanno predominato e predominano tuttora.

Lo scorso anno abbiamo messo in guardia i nostri lettori contro le ingannevoli manovre di Trudeau. I canadesi e molti italiani-canadesi si fecero trarre in inganno. Molti dicevano che i liberali avrebbero dato lavoro e avrebbero risolto il proble-

ma dell'inflazione. Dopo un anno abbiamo quasi un milione di disoccupati, il costo della vita aumenta e Trudeau se la fa come prima e più di prima con i suoi comari come l'aumento del prezzo delle benzine ha dimostrato. Quest'anno i conservatori stanno riproponendo la

manovra. Essi confidano nella memoria corta del popolo. Gli americani in cui sono stati coinvolti i ministri ed i capocannoni conservatori sono dimenticati dietro la cortina fumogea della accesa polemica di Bill Davis contro Trudeau ed il Governo liberale di Ottawa.

Se la manovra riesce, i conservatori avranno rivelato e fra un anno tutti saranno pronti a protestare. Ma allora sarà troppo tardi. Indubbiamente ritorneranno ai nostri lettori che Bill Davis sta recitando alle lettere il copione di Trudeau dell'anno scorso. Si è recitato-

che agli all'ora per il pieno di John Lombardi e non sappiamo se abbia parlato o meno. Cicerone diceva che la storia si ripete e che non si può fare a meno di ripetere gli errori del passato.

Per non ripetere gli errori del passato dobbiamo fare un esame onesto della situazione generale e quindi operare tenendo conto dei nostri legittimi interessi. Come nel passato, Forza Nuova pro-

ri del passato dobbiamo fare un esame onesto della situazione generale e quindi operare tenendo conto dei nostri legittimi interessi. Come nel passato, Forza Nuova pro-



Mario Soares, capo dei socialisti portoghesi, ad una dimostrazione popolare a Lisbona.

## PORTOGALLO: verso la guerra civile?

Il fantasma della prima guerra portoghese del 1975 sta avanzando nell'alta di cui dubitare d'autunno. In aprile del 1974, quando la monarchia dopo 30 anni di dittatura fascista, una grande speranza si "impossessò" del portogale.

Era giunta anche per così la democrazia e la libertà? Venne però subito la giunta militare con le sue ambizioni ed ideologiche dottrine rivoluzionarie. Vennero le elezioni per la costituzione che dette al partito socialista il 35 per cento dei voti e solo il 13 per cento al partito comunista stalinista di Ota, Venne il colpo di mano del giornale liberale, l'unico in mano socialista, sequestrato dal comunisti.

Ora la situazione sta precipitando. Mario Soares, il leader del partito socialista

portoghese ha detto chiaramente che non accetterà più una dittatura comunista contraria al valore del popolo portoghese. Egli sostiene che le forze politiche del-

buto essere rappresentate sulla base del voto popolare. La giunta stessa è divisa tra il moderato Costa Gomes, presidente, il filocomunista Goncalves, e l'ul-

tra-estremo Otelo del Carralho, capo della polizia. L'economia instaurata è più o meno la reazione sindacata sta scatenando la rivolta contro quella che viene definita l'oppressione comunista.

Le sedi comuniste vengono assaltate dai comunisti e i soldati che vengono inviati a sedare le rivolte, talora familiarizzano con i rivoltosi, come è avvenuto a Ponte de Lima. Ci sono stati i primi morti e molti feriti. Ci sarà la guerra civile? Il difficile dirlo.

Intanto il generale Otelo del Carralho ha già minacciato il Campo Figueiro: cioè l'imprigionamento dell'opposizione nel grande campo per isolarlo dalla periferia di Lisbona.

In questo momento tutto appare possibile. Una cosa però è certa: la speranza è morta.

La sinistra socialista in crisi, per ridare al popolo dell'Ontario le risorse energetiche che gli appartengono, per erigere una politica unitaria che crei stabilità in numero adeguato al bilancio e per i ragionevoli per creare attività ridotti per le madri lavoratrici, per unificare e rendere più scuola le leggi sul lavoro, per dare dignità compensazione ai lavoratori e pensioni di anzianità.

In ogni campo dove la dignità umana di tutti i cittadini viene minacciata dalla traccola degli interessi politici, l'INDP è sempre stato in prima linea a combattere le nostre battaglie ai vecchi.

Alle prossime elezioni l'INDP sarà l'alternativa ai vecchi partiti. Sarà anche la nostra alternativa

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L'alternativa N.D.P.

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periods, took care of distribution, advertising and promotion. In a synthesis of the role played by *Forze nuove* in the community, Odoardo Di Santo wrote, "the newspaper took on a dual nature. First, to fight the establish-

ment within the Italo-Canadian community, and secondly, to debate the broader political issues as they affected the Italo-Canadian worker.”<sup>27</sup>

In the present essay, it is impossible to analyse in detail eleven years of editorial activity and political orientation, which branched out in several directions: local, provincial, national, Italian and Canadian, and international, as well. It may be said, however, that *Forze nuove*'s basic editorial policy was critical support for the NDP and the union movement. Regarding the NDP, the paper always pressured the party to recognize publicly the immigrants' important role in the economy of the province and within the party. To make this point clear, key articles were published in Italian as well as in English. Prominent personalities of the NDP, such as David Lewis, Jan Dukušta, and Melville (Mel) Watkins of the Waffle group, a radical current within the NDP, enlightened with their writings specific aspects of the Party's national or provincial policy. This helped gain allies among the ethnic groups within the party and among the Wafflers, who in the late 1960s and early '70s were a very active group. Along with the Wafflers, ADI and the editors of *Forze nuove* all shared a radical approach to workers' issues. The ADI membership, however, could not share the Wafflers' strong and enthusiastic nationalism, which to Italian ears sounded like another form of fascism.

As mentioned, *Forze nuove* and most of the people behind it kept a critical affiliation with the NDP. More than once ADI stood against the Provincial Executive in matters of policy or when it tried to parachute candidates in ridings where the Italian vote was strong and ADI had a wide base. For example, the NDP executive and ADI confronted each other during the nomination in the Dovercourt riding for the 1971 provincial election. The nomination went to Steve Penner, who had the support of the ADI and the local Italians.<sup>28</sup> A similar confrontation occurred in Downsview for the nomination of the NDP candidate in 1975.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps the desire to have a more docile Italian group induced the Provincial NDP exec-

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<sup>27</sup>*Polyphony*, 4,1 (1982): 123.

<sup>28</sup>See, "L'ADI è l'unica associazione politica socialista italiana," by Egidio Marchese in *Il giornale di Toronto* (31 Aug. 1971): 5. In the Dovercourt riding, the Provincial executive opposed the candidacy of Steve Penner. Penner almost won the seat. He was declared the winner on election night, but after a recount it was determined that he lost by only 39 votes to the PC candidate George Nixon. After the recount the final results were: George Nixon (PC) 6,183 votes; Steve Penner (NDP), 6,144; Dan De Monte (Lib.) 5,116; and William Steward (Com.) 429.

<sup>29</sup>See *Forze nuove* (Sept. & Oct. 1975): 7.



utive to go along, after some initial resistance, with the creation of the short-lived NDP *Sezione Italiana* (Italian section) and the publication of *Avanti! Canada* in 1975-76.<sup>30</sup> Both initiatives were fully financed by the Party. Several young idealists, men and women, staffed the *Sezione* with enthusiasm, among them: Mario Ciccoritti, Nino D'Aprile, Ugo Pennaccino, Nivo Angelone, Mauro Buccheri, Peppe Cutellé, Fernando Di Marco, Caterina Mele, Silvana De Bona, Cosimo (Mino) Stefani, and others.

On more than one occasion the ADI and the *Sezione* found each other on opposite sides. For example, in the 1975 Downsview nomination, ADI and *Forze nuove* endorsed Odoardo Di Santo while many members of the *Sezione* supported Allen Shapiro, the candidate favoured by the provincial Executive. Once nominations were over, however, both *Forze nuove* and *Avanti! Canada* supported all the NDP candidates during the election; and the people involved in both newspapers worked hard in the campaigns to elect the Italian Canadian candidates: Odoardo Di Santo in Downsview, Tony Lupusella in Dovercourt, Tony Grande in Oakwood, and Ross McClellan in Christie.

Within the community, *Forze nuove* regularly brought to the forefront issues relevant to workers in general and Italian immigrants in particular. Some were old questions relating to the construction industry: safety on the job and the reform of the Workmen's Compensation Board. Other matters involved second generation Italians, the problem of teaching Italian in the public schools, and the abolition of "vocational schools." These schools essentially had the unspoken objective of channelling children of immigrants into manual jobs, often regardless of their ability or their parents' wishes.

Regarding the teaching of Italian, *Forze nuove* maintained that it was the provincial government's responsibility to ensure that Canadian-born children of Italian parents (or other ethnic groups) received the education they deserved, including the teaching of Italian (or other ethnic language) if demand warranted it. When, in the summer of 1975, the Italian government decided to provide funds and coordinate personnel for the teaching of Italian in Canada, *Forze nuove* stood firm against such a move, considering it an intrusion that actually exempted the provincial government of its own responsibility.

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<sup>30</sup>According to Mario Ciccoritti, whose idea it was to have a *Sezione Italiana* of the NDP, the Provincial Executive of the Party initially opposed the idea. "It was a member of the Executive, Gordon Vichert, who insisted, pleading our case convincingly," said Ciccoritti.



The Italian government's initiative was contrary to the objectives of Italian cultural associations on site, such as the Dante Society, which were pressuring the provincial government to assume its responsibility regarding the education of the children of immigrants. An article signed by E. C. (Elio Costa), but discussed by the entire editorial board, clearly stated *Forze nuove's* position on this issue. "It is pleasing to see," wrote Costa, "that after much lobbying, the Italian Government has increased funds and has sent personnel to help promote the Italian language. However, the objective of the personnel sent from Italy should have been to help the local Associations, not to take their place." He then goes on to state that, "the struggle (that the various local cultural Associations have undertaken to obtain from Canadian authorities the recognition of the right of language instruction) is undermined. All the activities of local associations were directed to obtain from the Provincial government the commitment and, consequently, financial and organizational responsibility to educate neo-Canadian children in the language and culture of their parents."<sup>31</sup>

Though interested in international problems and in the political life of Italy, the main interest of *Forze nuove* was Canada and Italian Canadians. It did not shy away from biting criticism of the Italian community leaders when these leaders' uncommitted position avoided dealing with real problems facing workers and the community. Moreover, although the articles were often too long, they were written in plain and direct language, adapting in style and content to the need of the average Italian Canadian reader who, generally, had a grade five education or less.

The political position of *Forze nuove* and *Avanti! Canada* was similar, though the two papers differed profoundly in how each viewed the relation that Italian Canadians should have with Italy. *Avanti! Canada* welcomed to Canada the activities of the Italian political parties while *Forze nuove* opposed it. For example, in a piece published in its first issue, *Avanti! Canada*, in a polemic with the Federazione delle Associazioni e Clubs Italiani (FACI) and indirectly with *Forze nuove*, argued in favour of the Italian parties' involvement in the community. It maintained that the assistance provided by the "Patronati" would help integration and enhance Italian workers' interest in Canadian politics.<sup>32</sup> "We must say," wrote

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<sup>31</sup>See *Forze nuove*, September & October 1975, p. 7.

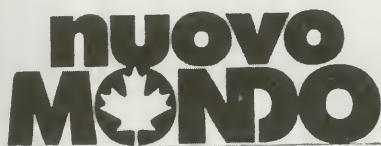
<sup>32</sup>*Patronati* are agencies created by major Italian political parties to provide much needed assistance to emigrants who have to deal with Italian bureaucracy both in Italy and abroad. The Italian government finances them in proportion to the number of people they assist.

*Avanti! Canada*, "that the Italian Government and the Patronati's interest in the conditions of Italian emigrants' lives in Canada neither prevents nor slows down the process of integration of our fellow countrymen in Canadian society, but aims to enhance and accelerate it."<sup>33</sup>



<sup>33</sup>*Avanti! Canada* 1,2 (1975): 4. The editorial board approved all articles before publication. Articles from persons who were not part of the editorial board bore the signature of the respective authors.

After just over a year of activity of the Italian *Sezione*, which involved dozens of Italian youth and many militant men and women, the NDP provincial executive decided to cut the funds that paid the rent for the St. Clair Avenue office and the secretary's salary. The *Sezione* thus came to an end and with it so did *Avanti! Canada*. Soon after it ceased publication, two other left-wing newspapers sprang up in Toronto in 1977: *Lotta unitaria* (United struggle) and *Nuovo mondo*. The former was the organ of the



mensile di politica, attualità e cultura

ANNO III N. 7 LUGLIO 1979 - 25 CENTS.

SECOND CLASS MAIL REGISTRATION NUMBER 408

La crisi energetica negli USA

Le sette sorelle  
contro Carter

a pag. 8



La poesia  
di Mary Di Michele

a pag. 7

Per la prima volta un socialista potrebbe diventare capo del governo

## INCARICO A CRAXI

Per la prima volta, nella storia d'Italia, è stato affidato ad un socialista l'incarico di formare il governo. Il socialista è Bettino Craxi, segretario del Partito Socialista Italiano.

Dopo la rinuncia di Andreotti a proseguire il mandato affidatogli da Pertini, il Presidente della Repubblica, tenuto conto della situazione politica determinata con il voto del 3 giugno, ed in particolare dalla possibilità di conferire l'incarico di formare il governo a un non democristiano, ha chiesto proprio al segretario del PSI, che ha accettato,

di formare il prossimo governo.

Le difficoltà di Craxi non saranno poche anche se l'accentuazione dell'incarico fa pensare ad un già probabile accordo tra socialisti e democristiani. Le maggiori opposizioni a Craxi dovrebbero venire infatti dalla Democrazia Cristiana che si vede privata, per la prima volta, della possibilità di dirigere il governo, ma evidentemente il segretario socialista si fiducioso di portare positivamente a termine il suo mandato. Un eventuale fallimento di Craxi potrebbe gravi problemi e si ritorcerebbe a parlare

di elezioni anticipate.

Ma se Craxi riuscirà a formare il governo, che tipo di governo sarà? E' questo un grosso interrogativo. Perché se Craxi riceverà soprattutto l'appoggio dall'ala moderna della DC che fa capo a Fanfani, Donat Cattin e Bisaglia, allora l'ipotesi sarà pesante e l'atteggiamento dei comunisti all'opposizione diventerebbe molto duro perché si tratterebbe soprattutto di un governo anticomunista. In quest'ipotesi il Partito Socialista correbbe il rischio di una profonda spaccatura. Se invece il governo Craxi si formerà soprattutto

per portare al governo la classe lavoratrice in uno spirito unitario ed in funzione interlocutoria, per far maturare le condizioni per un governo della sinistra, come sostiene Signorile, allora il discorso è diverso e che se va approfondito da tutta la sinistra.

## La visita in Canada di Dino Pelliccia

Dino Pelliccia, della sezione emigrazione del Partito Comunista Italiano, è stato in Canada per una visita di due settimane, durante le quali ha avuto numerosi contatti nelle collettività italiane di Toronto e Montreal.

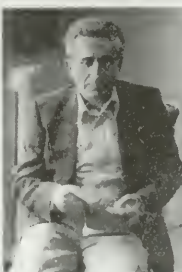
Pelliccia oltre a concedere numerose interviste a giornali e stazioni radio, ha tenuto due conferenze sulla situazione politica italiana dopo le elezioni nazionali ed europee.

A Toronto la conferenza, seguita da dibattito pubblico, si è tenuta presso la biblioteca pubblica di Dufferin St. Clair ed è stata organizzata dal circolo politico-culturale A. Labriola.

A Montreal la conferenza si è tenuta presso la scuola J.F. Kennedy ed è stata organizzata dal circolo Giuseppe Di Vittorio.

A Dino Pelliccia abbiamo chiesto di scrivere un articolo per il nostro giornale sull'attuale situazione politica in Italia.

Sui temi dell'emigrazione ed in particolare dai comunisti comolati Pelliccia ci ha detto che il Partito Comunista Italiano ha rappresentato il progetto di legge per la costituzione di comitati comunali democratici che permettano la partecipazione di tutti i cittadini, così come avviene per altri settori della vita pubblica italiana dove sono stati costituiti gli organi collegiali per le scuole, dove si dovranno costituire gli organi democratici dei soldati, degli ufficiali ed in altri settori nei quali il cittadino



Dino Pelliccia

tamente "E non si vede perché", ha detto Pelliccia, gli emigrati, debbano continuare ad essere portati per mano.

Le elezioni europee hanno visto la partecipazione degli emigrati italiani che è stata ancora proprio per mancanza di strumenti adeguati e democratici nell'organizzazione.

Le difficoltà organizzative venute alla luce nelle elezioni europee hanno confermato le perplessità del Pci sulla capacità dei comitati di organizzare un corretto svolgimento delle elezioni e la improponibile necessità di dare vita ai comitati con-

solari.

Il voto degli emigrati ha messo il Pci al primo posto con il 31 per cento mentre alla Dc è andato soltanto il 25,6 per cento. I democristiani hanno ottenuto il 3,1 per cento facendo giustizia della millantata forza del MSI presso gli emigrati.

Per quanto riguarda i ritardi dei pagamenti delle pensioni, Dino Pelliccia ha detto che il problema riguarda tutti i pensionati e non soltanto quelli che vivono all'estero e che esso va risolto con la riforma del sistema pensionistico, scelto sul quale si è errata la maggioranza precedente.

Il vice responsabile dell'ufficio emigrazione del Pci si è dichiarato contrario all'eventualità di affidare il pagamento delle pensioni ad un Ente straniero quale potrebbe essere appunto una Credit Union o una qualsiasi banca locale sui quali non sarebbe difficile operare dei controlli.

Il Pci, attraverso interrogazioni parlamentari ed interpellanze, spingerà i responsabili (INPS e Banco di Napoli) a svolgere un servizio migliore per gli emigrati.

Sulla legge per i contributi alla



Incarico a Craxi: una svolta storica?

L'articolo di Dino Pelliccia è a pag. 7.

Italian Club of the Canadian Communist Party (CCP) while the later was financed by the Federazione Italiana Lavoratori e Famiglie (FILEF), an emanation of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). These two publications were the result of inner conflict between those at *Nuovo mondo* who supported Euro-communism and the PCI's break from the Soviet domination; and the staff at *Lotta unitaria* who supported links with the Russian Communist Party.

*Lotta unitaria* expounded unimaginatively the policy of the local Communist Party with long monotonous articles. Ignoring the elementary rule of journalism, there was, it seems, no desire to make the paper attractive and appealing.<sup>34</sup> The first issue, six tabloid pages in length, featured five articles. These included a two-page editorial and another four pieces that discussed "Wages and Profits," "April 25" [Italian Liberation Day], "Racism," and "The Quebec Problem." Some improvement in appearance occurred in successive issues. In general, however, it was a paper by the faithful for the faithful, with no impact on the community.

*Nuovo mondo* was more dynamic in style and language. In the Canadian political scene it supported the NDP and ignored the hard-line CCP. This was the new direction taken by the FILEF, following the Italian Communist Party's reformist policy for Euro-communism. Explaining the paper's policy, its editor Franco Conte wrote: "*Nuovo mondo* maintains a critical approach on workers' organizations; for example, towards the New Democratic Party and Canadian unions."<sup>35</sup> But when *Nuovo mondo* shifted its attention from Canada to Italy, its political views changed as well. In Italy, the attention focussed on the Communist Party, and the socialists were also occasionally discussed. The communists' political initiatives in favour of emigrants on both sides of the ocean were continuously brought to the attention of the readers.<sup>36</sup>

*Nuovo mondo* had a circulation throughout the country that was greater than that of any other left-wing newspaper. Having being estab-

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<sup>34</sup>"In a newspaper the material [news] is nothing without packaging; the text is nothing without the context," wrote the renowned French intellectual René Uncheau, as quoted by Paolo Murialdi, *Come si legge un giornale*, 14.

<sup>35</sup>Conte, "Nuovo mondo," Poliphony 4.1 (1982):126.

<sup>36</sup>The following is one of the many possible examples: the article "L'emigrato nelle liste del PCI" reads in part: "The PCI's interest in the emigrant workers and their problems is not revealed solely during the XVth Congress, nor in the resolutions approved for the program of the European election; a new proof of this interest is the list of candidates for the next election of 3 and 10 June, and in the electoral program approved by the Central Committee recently held." *Nuovo mondo* (May 1979): 10.





# lotta unitaria

ORGANO DEL PARTITO COMUNISTA CANADESE

## ONTARIO: PERCHE' VOTARE PER IL PARTITO COMUNISTA?



WILLIAM STEWART, LEADER PROVINCIALE DEL PC, CROCIATO NEL DISTRETTO ELETTORALE DI DUFFERIN

Con alcuni giorni rimasti in questa campagna elettorale dell'Ontario, LOTTA UNITARIA ha creduto opportuno informare i suoi lettori sulle posizioni del Partito Comunista su alcuni punti salienti in quest'elezione.

A tale fine, Lotta Unitaria ha intervistato il leader provinciale per l'Ontario, William Stewart che concorre nel distretto elettorale di DUFFERIN della città di Toronto. L'alta disoccupazione che affligge il Canada e tutti gli altri paesi capitalisti, crea un problema della disoccupazione sia un problema nazionale in quest'elezione? Stewart, certamente, il problema maggiore in questa elezione è la crisi dell'economia. Ci sono almeno 400 mila disoccupati in Ontario e si prevede che questo numero aumenti ben presto a mezzo milione. Questa è una tragedia per centinaia e migliaia

di famiglie di lavoratori, specialmente gli immigrati, che hanno meno anzianità sul lavoro, e in particolare le donne e i giovani. Va notato che anche in Ontario, come in Italia, molti giovani con tanto di lauree e di specializzazioni, non riescono a trovare lavoro.

Questo è senz'altro il problema maggiore ma il governo dell'Ontario non ha soluzioni da offrire. L'unica sua soluzione è di dare più concessioni fiscali e di incrementare sempre di più i sussidi alle grandi corporazioni. Nell'ultimo bilancio, ad esempio, questo governo ha ridotto di 36 milioni di dollari le tasse che dovevano pagare le grandi corporazioni, mentre ha aumentato di 38 miliardi di dollari le tasse sul popolo lavoratore.

Il governo di Davis disse che queste misure avrebbero creato più posti di lavoro. Ma la disoccupazione invece è e sono diminuiti i soldi nelle tasche dei lavoratori. Anche il controllo delle paghe, che il governo provinciale ha appoggiato e non vigore, e la riduzione dei servizi sociali hanno contribuito alla disoccupazione. Solamente le corporazioni hanno beneficiato da queste misure anti-popolari.

Il Partito Comunista ha delle concrete soluzioni al problema della disoccupazione. Il nostro programma propone la costruzione di 200.000 case all'anno per i prossimi tre anni: i terreni devono essere espropriati dal controllo degli speculatori; il costo delle abitazioni deve essere ridotto ad un massimo di \$35.000 dollari a casa per ogni famiglia, con un "mortgage" di non più del

5%. Questo metterebbe a lavorare i disoccupati nel campo edile e stimolerebbe le altre industrie a creare più posti di lavoro.

Inoltre il governo deve nazionalizzare le nostre risorse naturali, sviluppare l'industria manifatturiera secondaria... Non bisogna lasciare le decisioni concernenti il futuro della nostra provincia, dei nostri cittadini e dei nostri giovani e anziani alla sete di profitti dei grandi monopoli.

L'U. Qual'è la posizione del Partito Comunista sulla salute e sulla sicurezza del lavoro? Stewart, la maggior parte dei lavoratori trascorrono quasi metà della loro vita

sul posto di lavoro e questa dovrebbe essere la parte piacevole, educativa e culturale della loro esistenza. Invece le condizioni di lavoro sono diventate intollerabili a causa dell'aumento del ritmo di lavoro, delle logorazioni, e le condizioni insicure e disumane di lavoro. Per questo il Canada ha la maggior percentuale di incidenti di lavoro del mondo occidentale e l'Ontario ne detiene il triste primato canadese.

Il governo sta attribuendo la colpa ai lavoratori, i quali sono accusati di non "fare attenzione" sul lavoro. Ma la vera soluzione al problema è di far sì che i lavoratori e i

CONTINUA A PAG. 1... STEWART

## BASTA CON L'AIB!



Continuano ad aumentare sempre di più i prezzi, i profitti, le tasse, il costo dell'energia, il vitto, capi di abbigliamento e gli affitti.

Oltre ai servizi sociali, indispensabili ad ogni lavoratore, sono stati tagliati fondi e finanziamenti. Volendo controllare l'inflazione e solo disprezzo dei salari, la politica del governo, protettrice degli interessi dei profitti delle grandi corporazioni multinazionali, è stata la causa della perdita di lavoro per migliaia di operai.

Il popolo lavoratore e la classe operaia devono scuotersi dalle spalle l'attacco sempre più continuo delle grandi corporazioni multinazionali, dei monopoli e del governo che stanno attaccando lo stesso tenore di vita degli operai e lavoratori.

Non ci sono valide ragioni per abbassare sempre di più i salari reali e dei lavoratori.

Le forze principali che possono portare avanti una massiccia mobilitazione di masse per una azione politica e per far pressione sono: il movimento sindacale, il disoccupato, l'UMP e il Partito Comunista.

Sole una azione congiunta di queste forze può portare ad un cambiamento fondamentale nella linea politica del paese.

Tutti gli operai, tutti i lavoratori e i progressisti, devono unirsi per riannoverare il controllo dei salari, devono chiedere la creazione di nuovi posti di lavoro e la restaurazione del diritto alla contrattazione collettiva.

Che gli aumenti delle paghe giochino un importante ruolo nel creare inflazione è una vecchia assurdità. Qualcosa deve essere fatto subito per mettere fine a questo furto legalizzato delle paghe dalla classe operaia e dei popolo lavoratore.

## WINNIPEG:

### NASCE NUOVA CELLULA ITALIANA DEL PCC

L'undici maggio scorso è stato eletto a Winnipeg Manitoba, il primo direttore della nuova Cellula ANTONIO GRAMSCI onni finalmente realizzando le aspirazioni dei tanti compagni esistevano nell'ambito di quella comunità italiana.

La fondazione di un'altra cellula in lingua italiana del Partito Comunista Canada è Winnipeg è un fatto positivo; maggiormente è

indice dello sviluppo ideologico-politico-sociale dei lavoratori, in particolare dell'attività di azione della lotta di classe e con essa il sostegno al partito dei lavoratori, il Partito Comunista. Inoltre è un passo avanti per la causa e la lotta per il socialismo e un Canada socialista. Tanti auguri ai nuovi compagni.

lished by the FILEE, which had branches in several Canadian cities in Eastern as well as in Western Canada, the paper had offices in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. Mail and articles from these and other Canadian cities were continuously received and published and the paper was sent in bundles to these offices, which looked after its distribution.



The impact of these left-wing publications on the Italian community was generally positive: *Forze nuove* lasted eleven years, the other periodicals much less and circulated mainly among the radical groups in the communities in Toronto and Montreal. As far as *Forze nuove* is concerned, an average of two thousand copies per issue were printed, of which over 600 copies were sent directly to subscribers mostly in Toronto and the rest were distributed through Italian outlets in the city. Its readers were mostly workers, tradesmen, acculturated professional people, and white-collar workers who placed themselves politically on the democratic left and were NDP or Liberal party supporters. *La parola* and *La carota* were bulletins of the ADI and CYC respectively and circulated mostly within their respective membership. *Avanti! Canada* was created in preparation for the 1975 provincial election and most of the NDP ridings in Toronto had it as a brochure for their electoral campaign with the cover page carrying a photograph of the riding's candidate. Though widely distributed, *Avanti! Canada* did not have a lasting impact on the wider community. This was also the case for *Lotta unitaria* and *Nuovo mondo*. As a whole, however, all these publications, each in its own way, strengthened the interest in a more democratic and multicultural Canada.

### Right wing newspapers

Turning to right-wing publications, the political landscape and the ideological perspective changes as well. The chief interest of the right-wing periodicals was in Italy and what was happening there. Some Canadian content found space in *Il faro* and *Occidente*, but only as a reflection of Italian politics or of the newspapers' anti-communist stand. The local neo-fascists' nationalism and their emphasis on "loyalty" to the white race, the nation (Italy), one man (Mussolini), and a party (Fascism), define the Italian right-wing militants in Canada as men and women in exile, even though they came to Canada willingly and of their own choice. It is also true that in Canada Italian neo-fascists did not find a Canadian party to dialogue with, as the socialists had with the NDP and the communists with the CCP. As a result, their isolation or exile was both ideological and factual.

Furthermore, because of their interest in Italy and her political problems, the neo-fascist publications marked the intestinal struggle that led the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) from post fascism, to beyond fascism, and finally to the democratic conservative position of the Alleanza nazionale party (AN). As we will see, the four titles (*Rivolta ideale*, *Tradizione*, *Il faro*, and *Occidente*) articulated different ideological positions and the political discourses they exposed reflected those both inside and out-

side of MSI. *Rivolta ideale* echoed the voice of the most intransigent and racist current espoused by many veterans of Mussolini's Italian Socialist Republic. *Tradizione*, on the other hand, affirmed its link with the Centro Studi Ordine Nuovo (ON), the youth extremist right-wing movement led by Giuseppe (Pino) Rauti, a follower of the reactionary philosopher Julius Evola. *Il faro* interpreted the hopes and perspectives of the MSI under its historical leader Giorgio Almirante in the early 1970s, and *Occidente* expounded the bourgeois conservative views that in time led the MSI beyond fascism to the founding of the Alleanza nazionale (AN).

The bimonthly *Rivolta ideale* appeared in Montreal in October 1964. Its title was taken from Giovanni Tonelli's weekly paper, *La rivolta ideale*, the first overtly fascist periodical to be published in Italy after World War II, which had first appeared on 11 April 1946. The Italian Canadian *Rivolta ideale* (written without the article 'La') was the product of a collaboration between two very radical right-wing associations: *Unità italica* in Montreal and what later became *Centro culturale tradizionalista, Italia d'Oltremare* in Toronto. The promoters and leaders of these two associations were Vittorio De Cecco and B. Chittaro in Montreal and Stefano Sinicropi, Severino Martelluzzi and Domenico Capotorto in Toronto. The chosen birth date for the neo-fascist publication was October, the anniversary month of the fascist March on Rome that, on 28 October 1922, led Mussolini to power.

While *Rivolta ideale* was launched in Montreal to mark this historical date, *Italia d'Oltremare* in Toronto distributed a leaflet prepared in Italy by Ordine nuovo (ON) for Italian immigrants and sent to all its contacts abroad. The leaflet reads as follows:

ORDINE NUOVO (Our honour is named loyalty)

Italian youth abroad should remember that forty-two years ago, the world subversion had chosen Italy as a land of conquest.

The genius of our race (*stirpe*) rose and created the miracle of a heroic resurrection.

Today, through socialism and the democratic left, international communism launches its offensive, aimed at hoisting the red flag on the Campidoglio in contempt (*dispregio*) of our civilization.

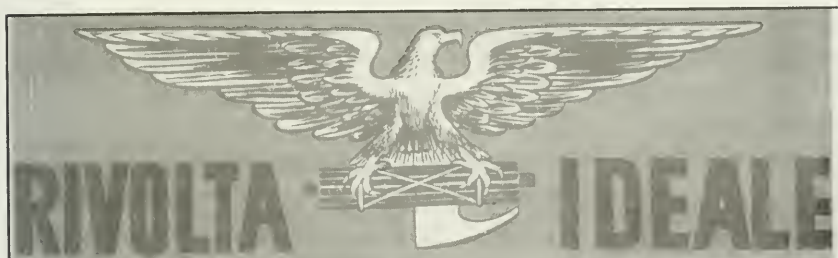
Today, once again Italy has been chosen as a land of conquest.

In the name of the traditional values of our race, we ask for the solidarity of the Italian youth abroad to stop the advancing Bolsheviks' baying hordes (*canea*).

HISTORY DOES NOT PARDON COWARDS.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>The leaflet was created by *Ordine nuovo* in Italy and sent for distribution abroad. It was their reaction to the Christian Democrats' opening up to the socialists and creating the first centre-left government in Italy.



ANNO 1 - NUMERO 1 -

MONTREAL - OTTOBRE - NOVEMBRE 1964

Esce ogni 2 mesi**GIORNALE OPERAIO ANTICOMUNISTA ITALIANO**

DEDICATO ALLA LOTTA CONTRO IL BOLSCEVISMO INTERNAZIONALE

E TUTTE QUELLE FORZE CHE VOGLIONO LA FINE DELLE RAZZE DELLE NAZIONI DEL CRISTIANESIMO  
BATTE PER IL TRIONFO DEI PRINCIPI FONDAMENTALI DI GIUSTIZIA NAZIONALE DI STATO DI PATRIAIL PASSATO ED IL PRESENTE

"Rivolta Ideale" è fedele al passato storico del Fascismo e di quello che ci ha insegnato. Noi non rinneghiamo gli errori, ma non neghiamo nemmeno quello che il Fascismo e Mussolini hanno fatto per l'Italia ed il suo popolo. Oggi, dove molti volta gabbani trovano comodo sputare sul piatto che ieri mangiavano, è divenuto un delitto parlare del Fascismo con sincerità e con onestà. Sono circa 20 anni che comunisti e democratici sputano fuoco e fiamme sul Fascismo ed i suoi rappresentanti. Ad un giovane ignaro della storia recente d'Italia, e soprattutto del periodo che va dal 1922 al 1945, può sembrare che questi anni siano stati il periodo più nero della storia Nazionale. Tutto questo si capisce facilmente se si pensa all'enorme propaganda anti-fascista fatta nel mondo dalla fine della guerra in poi. Noi giovani e meno giovani, che ci siamo riuniti attorno alla fiamma Nazionale con una volontà suprema di rinnovamento morale, sociale, Nazionale sappiamo che nonostante tutte le menzogne di ogni giorno e di ogni colore, la realtà storica del Fascismo resta e resterà nella storia d'Italia come un'esempio luminoso di Italianità, come uno sforzo splendido di guarire e cambiare radicalmente mali che sono fin troppo conosciuti e tipici della Nazione Italiana. Il Fascismo è quell'ideale per cui molti Italiani hanno imparato a vivere dignitosamente e non da lustrascarpe al soldo di stranieri e di idee straniere. Il Fascismo fu quello che realizzò la bonifica delle paludi Pontine, che diede all'operaio la Carta del Lavoro, e le prime protezioni sociali in suo favore. Il Fascismo ha il merito enorme di aver voluto e stabilito il Concordato con il Vaticano mettendo così fine ad una polemica storica che la Massoneria Italiana ed Internazionale alimentava nelle coscienze di ogni buon Cristiano.

Besides nostalgic commemoration, there were practical and immediate political reasons for the ultra-rightist militants' bold and alarming appeal to Italian youth abroad. The reasons are evident in the leaflet. The words "socialism and the democratic left" refer to the fact that in December 1963, the first centre-left government headed by Aldo Moro had taken office in Italy. Members of the left-wing Italian Socialist Party were part of the government team along with "the democratic left", the Social Democrat Party of Giuseppe Saragat and the Republican Party of Ortono Reale. This pointed to a new direction within the major Italian political party, the centrist Democrazia cristiana.<sup>38</sup> A centre-left government in

<sup>38</sup>Salvadori, *La Sinistra nella storia italiana*, 148.

power dashed the MSI's hopes created by Arturo Michelini's policy, which had given the party its brief taste of success when, in Parliament, it held the deciding vote in the centre-right coalition headed by Fernando Tambroni in 1960.<sup>39</sup>

As the leaflet in question clearly indicates, ultra-rightist militants drew an analogy between the centre-left government of 1964 and the political situation in 1922: now as then, Italy was seen to be under attack by Bolsheviks or "international subversion." As will be detailed below, the leaflet linked Toronto's radical group, *Italia d'Oltremare*, with the anti-parliamentarian Italian right-wing youth movement that in 1956 had left in protest the neo-fascist MSI. That year, supported by democratic conservative and "tame fascists", Arturo Michelini had been reconfirmed at the helm of the MSI. He defeated Giorgio Almirante, the radical historical leader of the party, who had the support of three radical groups: the socialist oriented veterans of the RSI, the hard core fascists, and the youth movement. Michelini continued his moderate policy, aimed at fitting the MSI into the democratic system and within the parliamentary process, and met with some success. With the approval of Enzo Erra, the youth representative on the Party's national executive, Michelini decided to limit the autonomy of the youth movement. This strategy was necessary because some

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<sup>39</sup>Several political and economic factors led to the failure of Tambroni's center-right government, but the event that revealed all the opposing components was the violence that followed the MSI's decision to hold its Congress in Genoa—a city awarded a gold medal for its armed resistance to fascism. All anti-fascist parties, unions, associations, and individuals considered that decision an insult and a challenge and all rose in protest and organized demonstrations throughout the country. In the truculent authoritarian political mentality of the day, police crushed the demonstrations, killing several men in different parts of the country. In Toronto, *Corriere illustrato* (16 July 1960) titled its editorial "*Undici morti, mille feriti: responsabilità comunista*" (Eleven deaths, one-thousand wounded: the fault of the communists). As a consequence of the brutal methods employed by the "celerini" (motorized police), Tambroni resigned and with him ended the centre-right experiment in Italy till 1994. Years later, spokesmen of the MSI, such as Domenico Minniti, recalling those events, stated: "It was a mistake to choose Genoa as a location for our Congress," see Nicola Rao, *Neofascisti!*, 82. In Canada, from its anti-communist perspective, *Corriere illustrato* (23 July 1960) found that "Tambroni ha reso un grande servizio alla vera democrazia." The following week (30 July 1960), an editorial in *Corriere illustrato* commenting on the violence and the eleven deaths cynically wrote, "I comunisti, andati per suonare sono stati suonati" (The Communists, who had gone to cudgel, have instead been cudged).



uncontrollable elements of the movement undermined through acts of violence and bravado the democratic image that Micheleni tried to bestow upon the party. Headed by Pino Rauti, a disciple of the philosopher Julius Evola, a large portion of the youth movement left the MSI and created the autonomous radical *Centro Studi Ordine Nuovo*.

The schism between the youth movement and the MSI was generational, ideological, cultural, and political. Under Micheleni, the MSI was on its way to becoming another of the many Italian parties in line with the Western world against communism. While accepting Evola's anti-modernity views, the youth movement was, however, opposed to both Western capitalism and Russian communism. For, as Evola stated, "Russia and America appear as two different expressions of the same thing, as two ways leading to the formation of that human type that is the ultimate conclusion of the processes that preside over the development of the modern world."<sup>40</sup> For Evola's followers such as Pino Rauti, both systems were the product of the same phenomenon, modernity, and had to be uncompromisingly opposed: according to Rauti, Evola led the young right-wing radicals away from their parochial fascist culture to a worldwide horizon of an international kindred of men and ideas. "Evola profoundly changed our convictions and provoked a cultural revolution in our world," Rauti recalls.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 344.

<sup>41</sup>Pino Rauti, quoted by Rao, *Neofascisti!*, 41. A man of many talents, Baron Julius Evola like the French René Guénon advocated a very radical opposition to the modern world. According to Evola, in primordial times or the golden age, society was a harmonious unity of four castes or classes (clergy, warriors, merchants or bourgeoisie, and servants or proletarians). Their hierarchical distinction was "neither political nor economical but spiritual," says Evola. At the apex of this pyramidal society was the king-pontifex (etymologically, the maker of bridge, *pons, pontis*), bridging the two realms of the world, the "becoming" of the physical world and the "being" of the metaphysical dimension. The metaphysical realm is the "spiritual-world above and beyond that supports the inferior-material-world and it is the real principle of life." According to Evola, back in remote prehistory, the rise of rationalism, which separated philosophy from religion or reality from myth, broke the harmony of the castes and the unity of the two realms: thus the "involution" of modernity began. Under the attack of rationalism the world's order, the "Tradition", slowly disintegrated. The main phases of this process of disintegration are the rise of Christianity undermining the Classic Greek-Roman world, the communal civilization, and the Renaissance and Reformation, which destroyed the Middle Ages. In this process, according to Evola, the hegemony passed down from the religious caste to the warriors and from these to the third estate or merchants. The last leg of this "regressive" march



These ideas mediated through the periodical *Ordine nuovo* (and perhaps through the reading of Evola's books including *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno*) circulated among some Italian right-wing radicals like the comrades of Toronto's *Italia d'Oltremare*, who were in contact with the Evolian youth movement *ON*, as the leaflet documents. The very title of the Toronto periodical *Tradizione* echoes the key word in Evola's anti-democratic conception of history and man and distinguishes it from *Rivolta ideale*. A further distinction is that in Montreal, a hard core fascist nucleus (veterans of the Petawawa Internment camp, 1940-1945, like Gentile Dieni, one of about twenty Italian Canadians who voluntarily enrolled for the fascist invasion of Ethiopia in 1935-36) had been present there all along.<sup>42</sup> New immigrants to Montreal, such as De Cecco, gave this hard core nucleus a fresh start, which was strongly marked by anti-Semitism. In Toronto, on the other hand, neo-fascists were, as far as one can tell, all newcomers who averted the gross anti-Semitism of their Montreal counterparts.

The first issue of *Rivolta ideale* was eight letter-size sheets printed on one side only and stapled together. At the beginning, the periodical was divided into two parts: the first part, pages one to four, was edited in Montreal while the second part, pages five to eight, was edited in Toronto. In every issue in our possession, each page edited in Toronto carried a slogan, popular with fascist veterans. For example, on pages five and six the slogan reads, "Even if all others fail we keep faith to (or by) ourselves," on

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was the French Revolution, which opened the door to the fourth estate, the servants, with democracy and communism.

Confusing technical development with progress, modern Man has, Evola argues, slowly alienated himself from the metaphysical or spiritual realm. Integrating and mixing social castes and races, modernity has destroyed the metaphysical order, creating an undifferentiated society and impure races of bastards. This social and racial chaos is today embodied in both, liberalism and its democracy and socialism and its ultimate development communism. Consequently Western Man has totally lost his divine origin and his "spiritual" and "heroic dimension." Man has become the one "dimensional," materialistic "homo oeconomicus." Odd as it occurs, starting from opposite premises than Evola, Herbert Marcuse of Frankfurt School arrived at the same conclusions. See his *One-Dimensional Man*. Evola's "revolt" against modernity implies, then, a return to "Tradition," pyramidal society, by returning to the spiritual value of the castes and the differentiation and purity of the races. However, races should not be understood in the "scientific-biological" sense, which, according to Evola, are only "idols of nineteenth-century Positivism."

<sup>42</sup>See Principe, *The Darkest Side of the Fascist Years*, 71; Bruti Liberati, "The Internment of Italian-Canadians," 76-98.

page seven it reads, “cowards and servants are not ... [a word is illegible] to God,” on page eight the slogan is, “our honour is called loyalty.” This was coined on the basis of the Nazi motto, “SS man, your honour is your loyalty” which, according to Evola, echoes an ancient Saxon maxim, “Every honour derives from your loyalty.”<sup>43</sup> In tune with the slogan, the content of the articles edited in Toronto often contrasts and compares the loyalty of fascists with the betrayal of anti-fascists.

In the subtitle, *Rivolta ideale* declares itself to be an “anti-communist Italian workers’ paper dedicated to the struggle against international bolshevism and all those forces that postulate the end of races, nations, and Christianity. It stands for the triumph of the fundamental principles of nation, state, justice, and fatherland (*Patria*).” The Italian Canadian neo-fascists both in Montreal and Toronto emphasized their loyalty to the *Patria*. In the article “Idee e programmi” (Ideas and programs), which might be considered their ideological and political manifesto, they emphatically state what they call their “new revolutionary vision of the world.” Echoing Evola’s ideas, their world is “antagonistic to the present capitalist-Bolshevik society.” They then go on to explain what this new vision of the world entails and what they stand for; namely 1) “... a stern and disciplined society, purged of its democratic, decadent and laughable attitudes;” and 2) “a society based on the authority of the state—the state should guide the national community, a community of blood.”<sup>44</sup>

In synthesis, *Rivolta ideale* stood against democracy, bolshevism, Judaism, Freemasonry, and blacks whose objective had been, according to the periodical, to drain the strength and undermine the leading “role of the Aryan race.” From the first issue on, its editors expressed their racist ideology clearly and without ambiguity: “We want and we prepare a ‘NEW ORDER’ for all nations of the white race. We want the individual to be conscious of himself and of his duty to the national community.” Again echoing Evola’s views they say, “We do not want him [the individual] to be a number or a machine as democracy and communism conceive him to be. We fight against all those international powers that for centuries have tried to destroy Christian unity, the concept of *Patria*, and loyalty to race.”<sup>45</sup> Moving beyond nationalism, the editors’ concept of loyalty had expanded to include race.

True to its anti-Semitic program, *Rivolta ideale* published a long two-

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<sup>43</sup>Germinario, *Razza del Sangue*, 34.

<sup>44</sup>*Rivolta ideale* 1.1 (Oct.-Nov. 1964): 3.

<sup>45</sup>*Rivolta ideale* 1.1 (Oct.-Nov. 1964): 2.

part article by the editor Vittorio De Cecco, reviewing Giovanni Preziosi's life and work. An excommunicated Catholic priest, Preziosi was the most infamous among Italian supporters of anti-Semitism during the fascist era. He saw Jews plotting against Italy everywhere, even among the leading core of the fascist party, in which he was isolated and despised by almost every one. For example, the most extreme and anti-Semitic leader, Roberto Farinacci, described his collaborator Giovanni Preziosi, as "an integral racist but a filthy Jew in his soul."<sup>46</sup> Preziosi enjoyed some macabre prestige during the second phase of fascism, the fascism of Mussolini's Italian Social Republic, which was created and dominated by the Nazi army occupying Northern Italy. When on 25 April 1945, partisans freed Milan, Preziosi and his wife jumped to their death out of their apartment window.

The apologetic articles reviewing Preziosi's life conclude with the following statements: "In his [Preziosi's] name we are going to establish a course in racism [racial knowledge] and social politics; a course which will be given to our members in the future" and "a club of revolutionary policy, now under study by our youth group, will be constituted and named after him."<sup>47</sup> In another issue of *Rivolta ideale*, the editor De Cecco reviews the thought of Alfred Rosenberg, the leading official Nazi theorist of the Aryan race's superiority,<sup>48</sup> giving a European reading of Rosenberg's strictly pan-German view of the Aryan race. Furthermore, De Cecco criticizes the Roman Catholic Church for charging the Nazi revival of pre-Christian religious rites as "pagan": "The Church calls pagan these socio-political phenomena. According to us this is not exact. It would be better to call them with their proper name, returning to the origin: SOLAR CULTS were celebrated one millennium before Christ. They are not 'evil' as the Church makes its faithful followers believe. They are manifestations of a mystical religion, adoring the Divine Being dominating the Cosmos."<sup>49</sup>

Eventually the collaboration between the Toronto and Montreal neo-fascist groups came to an end, although it is not known exactly when or why.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps the Toronto group was not ready to follow the crude and unarticulated racist stand taken in Montreal. Perhaps they believed in a

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<sup>46</sup>Roberto Farinacci, quoted by Giorgio Bocca, *La repubblica di Mussolini*, 205.

<sup>47</sup>*Rivolta ideale* 5.5 (May 1968): 5.

<sup>48</sup>*Rivolta ideale* 7.1 (Jan.-Feb. 1970): 6-7.

<sup>49</sup>*Rivolta ideale* 7.1 (Jan.-Feb. 1970): 6.

<sup>50</sup>Unfortunately Stefano Sinicropi, who could explain the end of the collaboration, is severely sick and has lost his memory and lucidity; and De Cecco died recently.

more refined form of racism, the racism of the soul formulated by Evola.<sup>51</sup> Another important difference between the two groups was that in Montreal, *Unità italica* had contacts with other non Italian right-wing extremist and racist groups,<sup>52</sup> while, as far as one can tell, Toronto's *Italia d'Oltremare* confined its activities and contacts within the Italian community.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, Toronto's young and more mature right-wing militants of *Italia d'Oltremare* began to publish their own periodical, *Tradizione*, in 1970. Its subtitle reads: "Internal Monthly Bulletin of the Traditionalist Cultural Centre '*Italia d'Oltremare*'." Even *Tradizione* was produced with the same parsimonious means initially used for *Rivolta*

<sup>51</sup>In ending his "Appunti sulla morfologia spirituale. Analisi dell'anima ebraica," Evola wrote: "Specie in fatto di dissociazioni interne, di labilità, di mancanza di dirittura e di forma interna, è evidente che si tratta di fenomeni che, purtroppo, non sono limitati all'elemento ebraico, ma che anche molti esponenti della umanità detta 'aria' presentano, e ai nostri giorni più che mai. Così dovrebbe essere nostra massima colpire l'Ariano 'ebreo' prima dell'Ebreo tale per razza e per destino; combattere l'Ebraismo come una possibilità negativa latente anche nell'uomo non ebreo e capace di emergere e di predominare in ogni periodo di crisi, prima di portare unilateralmente l'attenzione sull'Ebraismo che si incarna in uomini di determinata razza del corpo," Evola, *Testi di 'Ordine Nuovo'*, 43.

<sup>52</sup>For example, under the title "Le nostre attività," we read, "sabato 18 marzo 1968, nella locale Casa d'Italia, l'Unità Italica ha commemorato la data del 28 marzo 1919, in quell'anno venivano fondati a Milano, in Piazza San Sepolcro i "Fasci di Combattimento" da Benito Mussolini. Alla cerimonia erano presenti i membri dell'associazione, più alcuni camerati Ungheresi, Canadesi e Rumeni. Il Capo dell'Unità Italica V. De Cecco ha illustrato in un breve discorso il significato della storica data. Il Prof. Emile Mircea Horia, ex appartenente alla Guardia di Ferro Rumena, ha poi presentato e commentato il suo libro di recente pubblicazione, *Restauration chrétienne* nel quale egli denuncia le infiltrazioni marxiste e massoniche nella chiesa di Roma." *Rivolta ideale* (May 1968): 8.

<sup>53</sup>On Sunday, 29 July 1973, the Western Guard Party invited Italians to attend a commemoration of Mussolini's birthday. As far as we know (we were demonstrating there, at 260 Ashdale Avenue) no Italian attended that rally. The Western Guard distributed a leaflet announcing the meeting. It was headed with the words IL DUCE in solid large letters and bore a photograph of Mussolini among his comrades. The photograph was framed between two large fasces. The caption under the picture reads, "Domenica 29 luglio 1973. The Western Guard Party organizza [sic] un ricevimento in onore del compleanno del Duce. Tutti gli interessati sono cordialmente invitati al 260 di Ashdale Ave. Sarà servito un rinfresco gratis. Per informazioni chiamare 466-3446. Prezzo d'ingresso \$2.00." Except for the word organizza, an obvious typographical error, the Italian language of the announcement is correct and that of a native speaker.

*ideale*: a duplicating machine and legal-size sheets stapled together. The editor was Stefano Sinicropi, assisted by Antonio Iozzo, then a university student, and Domenico Capotorto.

Although it shared the same ideals professed by *Rivolta ideale*, *Tradizione* was more refined in presenting its program and its goals, which were, according to its editor(s), solely cultural and directed to the membership of *Italia d'Oltremare* and its supporters. As mentioned, *Tradizione* did not foster the gross anti-Semitic and anti-racial slurs or the brash arrogance displayed by *Rivolta ideale*. For example, the contents of the first issue included a poem by the French poet Robert Brasillach who had been executed by the French resistance, a review of Evola's book *Lo yoga della potenza*, a note commemorating the fascist philosopher Giovanni Gentile, and an historical page, "*Idi di Marzo*," about the betrayal and assassination of the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar. However, the ideological basis of the group *Italia d'Oltremare* is best expressed in two short articles, "Tradizione" and "Precisazione."

In the first piece, which defines what they mean by the word "tradizione," the Evolian concept is tied to a sense of hopeless stoic resignation:

For us *tradizione* is not an empty word detached from the reality of the modern world. It is a powerful force, which has, throughout the centuries, been embodied in highly civilized Republics, Monarchies and Empires. The essence of *tradizione* that we refer to is a spiritual conception of life and world in which Man is not considered only in his immanent existence but as a being belonging to a transcendental dimension (a religious dimension). In this dimension, Man has the power to ascend to the highest peak of his interior boundless potential ([these men were considered] semi-gods in the Orient, heroes in Greece and Rome, Saints for the believers, great artists and statesmen [today?]).

It follows that an essential element for the man of "tradition" is his life style, that stern way of life, which in the Roman Empire was shared by all, from the Emperor to the humble citizen of Rome (Urbe).

The Modern era, characterized by the psychosis of naturalistic egalitarianism, has lost the vision of those principles and the possibility of their return is illusory.

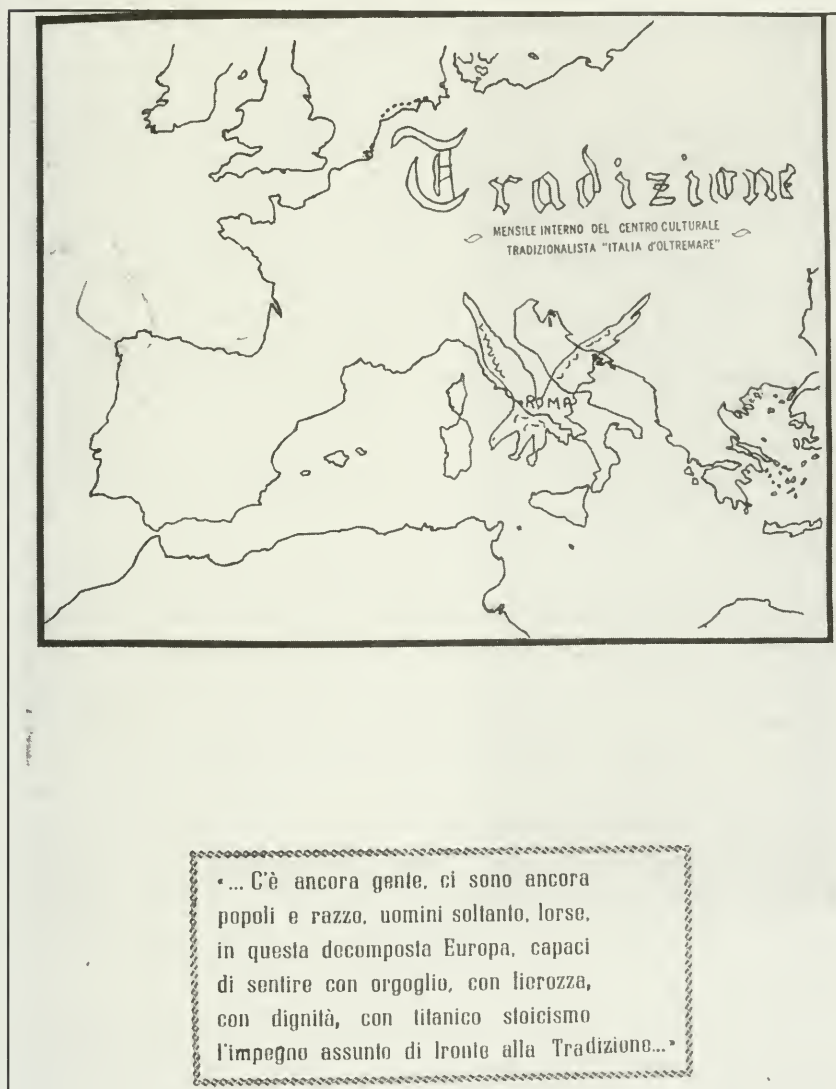
In the last hundred years, a swelling tide, which has been defined as progress, smashed, in the last World conflict, the residual resistance of the last rebels (Italy, Germany and Japan); and the tide has become uncontainable.

To appeal to the *tradizione* today is the last and extreme attempt to recreate that [stern] life style, which made the ancient empires great, in an Elite whose major achievement shall be to resist the egalitarian world in dissolution.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Tradizione* 1.1 (March-April 1970): 1; in a note titled "Riflessioni," Sinicropi restates this argument in *Il faro* 1.1 (31 Dec. 1971): 10.





Certainly stated unintentionally, the phrase, “the possibility of their return is illusory,” is perhaps the most destructive criticism ever inflicted on Evola’s esoteric conception of “tradition.”

The second piece, “Precisazione,” states *Italia d'Oltremare's* reaction to the news that Pino Rauti and some other leaders of ON had re-joined the MSI. True to Evola’s teaching, the Toronto radical activists’ opposition to and rejection of modernity was total: once again their stoic despair and sense of defeat dominate the written page as they maintained that corrupted democracy had “submerged everything.” Signed by Stefano

Sinicropi, the piece reads:

to those who repeatedly invite us to continue our struggle under the Flame [symbol of the MSI] and within the M.S.I. [sic] rather than continuing our sterile struggle alone, we reaffirm our ideas: our struggle is against the system. Since the M.S.I. has definitively set itself within the demo-party system [note the ambiguity of the truncated word 'demo', which might stand either for democratic or demonic or both], we have no use for such a party. In this particular moment when the democratic flood has submerged every one, and even many comrades of the executive of Ordine Nuovo have given in and re-joined the M.S.I., there is not much left for us to do except to be loyal to our ideals: we continue on the way indicated by those who sacrificed their life for the idea.<sup>55</sup>

However, not all the members of *Italia d'Oltremare* shared Sinicropi's views since the Association and even Sinicropi himself became involved in promoting *Il Faro*, as we shall soon see.

Neither *Rivolta ideale* nor *Tradizione*, the latter more than the former, had any interest in Canadian public life or community affairs. The problems of Italians in Canada were ignored. The discussion on the future of the world (which was supposed to be a new social order with the Aryan race as its leading mind and engine) was so abstract that it seemed a tribal, rather than a universal view of the world. One can argue that this was a sign of their alienation from communal life, a state of mind common to many Italian immigrants, as noted above, and an indication that there was no Canadian political party for them to dialogue with. However, true to their word and beliefs, some of the men involved in publishing *Tradizione* remained an example of the probity and the stern and anti-modern and 'decadent' way of life they preached: the siren song of riches had no allure for them.

The comrades of Montreal did not share the stoic stand of Toronto's *Italia d'Oltremare* and approved the use of violence against what they considered the communist aggression of Italy. Echoing like-minded Italian radical fringes, *Rivolta ideale* supported Italian right-wing groups meeting the communists on their own ground, violence with violence: "While all shades of Marxists elaborate plans and act to dominate the World and the weak Nations [...] the right-wing forces are wasting time in long discussions and useless polemics on what to do! There is too much talking in Italy," lamented *Rivolta ideale*. Then it goes on to state that, "It is necessary to act, to do

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<sup>55</sup> *Tradizione* 1.1 (March-April 1970): 3.

something. Be politically and ... also militarily ready! [...] our reader has already understood what we allude to and what we mean when we say being ready to act. We don't need to spell it out in detail. [...] If communists are organizing armed bands under the instruction of Albanian and Chinese agents on our national territory [...] we should not twiddle our thumbs (*stare con le mani in mano*) waiting for the Messiah to save us," it concluded.<sup>56</sup> But Italian right-wing militants did not need to be incited by *Rivolta ideale*. They did not wait for the Messiah: according to Ugo Pecchioli, "from 1969 to 1975 there were 4,384 acts of political violence in Italy, with 83 per cent of them committed by neo-fascists."<sup>57</sup>

While this wave of neo-fascist violence shook the democratic system in Italy, the monthly *Il faro* appeared in Toronto at the very end of 1971 (December 31). With this publication, the neo-fascist presence was felt in the Italian communities in Canada, ending the almost clandestine existence of *Rivolta ideale* and *Tradizione*. Skilfully edited by Giuseppe Derin, *Il faro*, a tabloid-size monthly, was financed by the MSI, which hoped eventually to harvest votes if Italian citizens abroad were to be given the right to vote abroad for elections in Italy, as eventually happened in 2002.<sup>58</sup> In the first issue of *Il faro*, Derin listed an impressive roll of reputed right-wing journalists as his collaborators from Italy. It included staff writers of *Il borghese*, an ambitious conservative monthly magazine, and at least one anti-parliamentarian, Giorgio Pisanò, the leader of the revolt of Reggio Calabria and editor of a most radical monthly titled *Candido*.<sup>59</sup> As correspondent from the United States (though retired in Switzerland) was none other than Giuseppe Prezzolini, who had been the editor of the prestigious periodical *La voce* (1908-16), past director of the *Casa Italiana* at Columbia University, in New York, and author of several books.

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<sup>56</sup>*Rivolta ideale* 5.5 (May 1968): 7.

<sup>57</sup>Drake, "Julius Evola," 89.

<sup>58</sup>It was said in the community that for the publication of *Il faro*, the Toronto neo-fascists received over \$50,000.00 from the MSI, but we are unable either to confirm or deny this allegation.

<sup>59</sup>In its first issue, *Il faro* published a full-page article by Giorgio Pisanò, titled "Popolo Bue Svegliati" (Wake Up, Dumb Oxen); p. 9. The article is a violent, verbal diatribe, against everyone and everything. He repeated his despicable charge against Giacomo Mancini, the leader of the Italian Socialist Party, calling him a "thief." Ten years later, after a long court case, the court exonerated Mancini of that vile charge, but in 1972 it cost him the leadership of the Party, being replaced by Francesco De Martino. In Mancini's defense see Cozza, *Tecnica di un'aggressione*.

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NON SONO UN PROFETA  
POPOLO BUE, SVEGLIATI!**

**INCHIESTA  
IL CALCIO  
IN CANADA  
AD UN BIVIO**

**TORONTO  
PAPA SCONFESSA  
LE ACLI, PADRE  
SBROCCHI LE OSPITA  
IN CANONICA**

**ROMA  
Il saluto di  
Mirko Tremaglia**

**Regalo all'Italia: boia di...  
MATERA: SIAMO TUTTI DOCTORS!  
E' TEMPO DI REGALI: GRAZIE E...BUON ANNO**

FOTOCRONACA

*Il faro* was the fruit of collaboration between the two Toronto right wing groups: *Italia d'Oltremare* and a new neo-fascist group *Comitato tricolore per gli italiani nel mondo* (CTIM), which was organized and headed by Giuseppe Derin, an ex fascist. The CTIM was the MSI's worldwide association headed by Mirko Tremaglia, a veteran of the RSI, and now (2004) Minister of Italians Abroad in Berlusconi's second government. The editor



in-chief was Giuseppe Derin, assisted by Vittorio Coco. The other members of the editorial board were Alberico Alberici, Giorgio Orla, Attilio Cubbeddu, Giovanni Declario, Domenico Capotorto, and Stefano Sinicropi. *Il faro's* local editorial board, made up of members of the two neo-fascist associations, confirmed their uneasy accord and, could be said to reflect the re-joining of the youth movement ON with the MSI in Italy. The editorial published in the first issue confirms the ideological compromise reached between the two groups. The repetition of the word *tradizione* makes this point clear: "besides bringing to mind the *traditional* lighthouse at the entrance of harbours, the masthead *Faro* is also a symbol of the *tradition* to which, in a world in decomposition, some nations, races, or perhaps even individuals *sensitive to spiritual values, may look for guidance as navigators, sailing in darkness, look to the lighthouse.*"<sup>60</sup> [emphasis added]

The editorial (which is an invective against democracy and communism as accomplices in the destruction of human values) never mentions fascism or the neo-fascist MSI. It leaves no doubt, however, that *Il faro* is a neo-fascist paper as the following passage makes clear: "We feel that our primary task did not end with the military defeat in 1945. Because, while everything around is chaos, the real problems remain unsolved, and moral decadence is becoming more pronounced, not for one moment have we doubted that we would once again be useful to Western civilization."<sup>61</sup> And in the note, "Appello ai nostri amici di Toronto" (Appeal to our friends in Toronto), one can read, "regarding its [the paper's political] orientation, there is no need to waste words. It is evident, isn't it?"<sup>62</sup>

Breaking with the isolation of previous right-wing publications, *Il faro* devoted some space to the problems plaguing the community, making the paper relevant to Italian Canadian readers regardless of their political orientation. The demise of this monthly is to be attributed to a mesh of different factors: financial, political, ideological, and personal problems. The spark that destroyed the precarious unity was this: one individual, [...], misappropriated for his personal use money from the group's funds. To avoid what they considered a scandal that would reflect negatively on the entire group, they did not call the police. But their collaboration became impossible.<sup>63</sup> This episode caused the latent ideological conflict between

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<sup>60</sup>*Il faro* 1.1 (31 Dec. 1971): 3.

<sup>61</sup>*Il faro* 1.1 (31 Dec. 1971): 1.

<sup>62</sup>*Il faro* 1.1 (31 Dec. 1971): 2.

<sup>63</sup>I learned this from conversations with some of the people involved with *Italia d'Oltremare* and the publication of *Il faro* (Berlinger, Capotosto, and Mastrangelo).



the politically oriented neo-fascists of the MSI and the uncompromising *Ordinovisti*, compounded by personal rivalries and financial difficulties, to explode. Since the financial support from Italy did not cover all expenses, the economic burden became too great for the few supporters and their shaken unity, thus destroying their hybrid child, *Il faro*.

Not long after the end of *Il faro*, *Occidente* appeared. This new monthly was Derin's offspring in every sense: it reflected his personality and his prudish intolerance, mirroring the above mentioned Roman periodical *Borghese* that Derin was so fond of. Nevertheless, there are several interesting differences between these two neo-fascist tabloids. *Occidente* did not have the impressive list of collaborators that *Il faro* boasted. Further, the scorching ideological criticism against democracy, characteristic of sectarian neo-fascist publications, disappeared from the pages of *Occidente*. The space devoted to events and problems in the Italian community was expanded, although it consisted of only 16 pages while *Il faro* had had 28. More importantly, *Occidente* translated its key articles into English in an attempt to reach the new generation of Italian Canadians and probably some of the non-Italian conservatives. In the 1975 Ontario's provincial election it supported the Progressive Conservative Party and some of its candidates advertised their name with paid ads.

Like *Il faro*, *Occidente* was a lively, though at times, waffling journal. It engaged in polemics with all the Italian Canadian publications: *Forze nuove*, *Il Corriere canadese*, *Mosaico*, *Il giornale di Toronto*, *Il samaritano*, and even with CHIN Radio. Though forceful and sharp, it never went beyond a fierce urban polemic with its political adversaries. *Occidente* opposed multiculturalism. Upholding a strong all-centralizing state, it could not understand an open society like the one sought and explored by Canadian multiculturalism. As a conservative newspaper it singled out and stood against what were considered the evils of modern, decadent society: women's liberation, homosexual rights, abortion, sexual education, and so forth. The editor could not understand that his dream of an old, nineteenth-century repressive society was disappearing. In an editorial that sounds like an instigation to violence, he wrote:

Two are the roots of man on this earth: Family and Country. The first is consecrated by all the sentiments and all the aspirations of our entire being; the second is the sense of the nation-state, the total sum of all the historical and cultural experiences of a people. In the world of today *the hour has certainly come to take up the cudgel in their defence*. International and incessant is the struggle, because international and frightful is the enemy, Communism.<sup>64</sup> [emphasis added]

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<sup>64</sup>*Occidente* 1.1 (1 Apr. 1975): 2.

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ANNO I N° 6

PERIODICO DI POLITICA E DI COSTUME

- OTTOBRE 1975 -

SECOND CLASS MAIL NO. 3464

L'AMICA  
DEL  
GIAGUARO

**F**ARE APPELLO ai sentimenti oggi è stato approvato. Tentare, varrebbe farsi radiatore di azzurro parole grasse la mancanza di argomenti teorici. Il concetto oggi è nell'interesse materiale, nell'utile immediato, nell'egoismo. Vale la pena di essere prave. Quelli sono i valori che contano. Non c'è spazio per i sentimenti. Che può misurare il moltiplicatore in il raddio tra la Zona A e la Zona B, o munta di Trieste, da provvisoriamente diventare delittivo? Che significa la per una commissione storica che il trentacinque anni da Capodistria da Pola, da Trieste, da Trieste, da Trieste, partano come nel letto la Puglia nel mare? La patria è lo spettacolo del quale si pagano i mali. Il bisogno è l'istintivo che divide la fabbrica dei padroni dalla strada proletaria.

Ma è da dire che, di fronte alla storia, non Stato non debba rinunciare alla sua sovranità sopra un lembo di territorio nazionale, almeno fino a quando non giunga la hora del diritto e il diritto della Zona. L'ordine ad un altro Stato solo perché le delinze di fatto e le ha nazionalizzate con i disegni più brutali, e tale tradizione di compromettere l'onore di un popolo.

La storia? L'onore? Il tradimento? Che cosa è la storia di fronte alle perquisizioni salariate? È un tradimento soltanto chi va a lavorare in un giorno di sciopero? E che c'entra poi l'onore? E' passato il tempo in cui l'Angelo, dopo Verres, compendia il programma del suo governo dicendo: «La guerra è impossibile, ma è altrettanto impossibile il dissenso». E Crispien? Pace, vigliacchi, ma con amore, subito posiamo l'onore più le idee che i benefici della pace? Oggi che parlo di amore, e vuol far politica, va assolutamente fascista, come un demone che voglia infilarsi in mare senza bagnarsi.

Questa è l'Italia che quel piagnucoloso subdolo di Aldo Moro dissacca sotto la sua ombra, questa è la gente che trent'anni di rissone democristiane e di albertiniani socialdemocratici hanno portato a rimpatrio di fronte alla socializzazione del territorio nazionale per la restituzione della Zona B alla Jugoslavia. E questi sono i miei governatori, impassibili ed indifferenti di fronte alla civiltà italiana che Augusto incalza nella Declina Regia, che Venezia legge, e in stessa come madre, che la occupazione austraria trasformava in archetipi di patrioti mimalisti del sacrificio di Nazario Sauro, che la forza mitica della città (fino alla fine privo) di umbili e compare di infelicità per sancire al matrios di Belgrado l'arrivo giusto di lavoro col sangue ogni segno dell'italiana intrinseca e così dimostrare che non era mai esistita nel secolo.

La sordità della classe dirigente nostrana, di fronte ai « partiti di governo, giornalisti di regime e servitori del teletorale, evitano ogni imbarazzo estremo. Un po' riprendono che la restituzione della Zona B rientra nella logica delle ragioni di Stato, un po' che il cane è di loro maglietta, un po' che il cane è di loro maglietta, un po' che l'operazione non può vantaggi che vantaggi, ne qualcuno di essi sembra di impietisti un taccone come torti e parole fare Indro Montanelli con quel suo umore (soltanto intanto) con il quale che a far marcire la breccia di fronte alle ammissioni dell'Insubetabile, alla supina accettazione delle situazioni di fatto, alla rinuncia a qualsiasi tentativo di pretesa per il dopo Tito, rassegnazione fatta che il stesso Montanelli ha proprio con una esclamazione istantanea, quasi voluttuosa, ha potuto e lavorarne le mani trattandosi di cose più grandi di lui.

E' una classe dirigente sorda anche di fronte alle più elementari argomentazioni che l'onore della strada possa essere contro la coscienza della Zona B, mentre l'ipotesi non passa che per rompere, o che la rompa, fin da quando a Londra, nel 1954, accettava il Memorandum d'intesa. Fin da quando rispondeva alle interrogazioni parlamentari di Livio, che nessun compromesso sulla sovranità italiana nella Zona B era in corso. Fin da quando consegnava il foglio di preavviso con Belgrado perché i cartelli di ombra avessero che da quel punto al centro

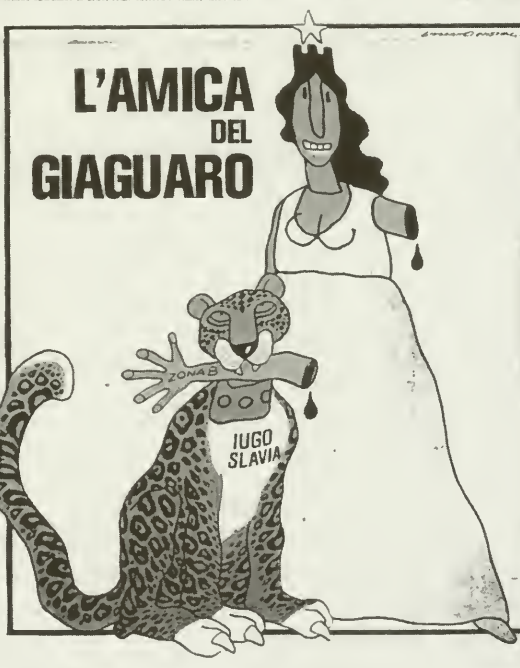
non le era non provvisoriamente affidata all'amministrazione di Tito, ma del tutto la Jugoslavia, fin da quando manteneva un rigoroso segreto sulla credenza già decisa persino con il ministro plenipotenziario fiorenti incaricato della vertenza di confine, sicché al diplomatico non restava che dimettersi per salvaguardare almeno la propria dignità.

Non c'è argomentazione che il governo italiano, dato che da sempre ha stabilito con di rimborsare, ma di arretrati, l'« tempo perduto ricordargli che per l'art. 21 del Trattato di Pace la sovranità italiana sulla zona del restituito Territorio Libero sarebbe venuta a cessare solo con l'entrata in vigore in zona del Trattato, che il Trattato in esse non entra mai in vigore per le resistenze antitaliane dell'Yugoslavia e della Jugoslavia, che nel frattempo la Dichiarazione Tripartita del 20 marzo 1945 decise la restituzione all'Italia sia della Zona B che della Zona A, poiché riconosceva entrambe italiane, che la sovranità del nostro Stato non è venuta perciò a cessare, dato che la costituzione del Territorio Libero non ebbe luogo, che non essendo mai nato il Territorio Libero, l'amministrazione fiduciaria jugoslava sulla Zona B, come quella italiana sulla Zona A, non potevano avere che carattere provvisorio, restavano entrambe le zone, come tuttora restano, sacrosante

territorio nazionale sotto la sovranità del nostro Stato: che pertanto l'attuale rinuncia alla Zona B da parte del governo Moro, e la restituzione di essa a Tito, è reato di alto tradimento, e inoltre costituisce una lesione «viziata» di trattati internazionali legali non alla volontà «liberale» dell'Italia e della Jugoslavia ma multilaterale di tutti gli Stati europei. Ne sentiamo ai argomenti bastano a spostare i grandi traditori dalla riva al tiranno slavo. Alle sue mura il cane arroccato per anni ed anni presidenti della Repubblica e presidenti del Consiglio, ministri e segretari di partito, magnati dell'industria e uomini del Vaticano, e poi una crisi di nervetti e di nervetti di ogni calibro, giunti a porre al solito del grosso loro fianco uno dei gruppi politici di sinistra alle soglie del governo.

E' ucraino l'ordine delle cose che nel momento in cui molti anni dopo, questo gruppo tratta col fratino il più fragile dei governi da allora «uccidono» nel nostro albero Paese, in cui l'adeguamento alle richieste del protettore slavo. Tanto più che adesso ha come alleato quel partito comunista che con Belgrado divide ideologia e sistema politico. Un modo come un altro per addormentare, ma pure nella pelle degli esuli italiani e in casa al nostro d'Italia.

NINO TRIPOLI

MISSIONE DI ALMIRANTE  
ALLA CASA BIANCA

PAGINA 7-8-9

Clearly *Occidente* and its editor mutilated the old triad of God, Country and Family, by leaving out God: a state of affairs interestingly at odds with traditional conservatism. Changes had infiltrated even the conservative, neo-fascist citadel: the editor wanted to stop social changes, although he was not even able to stop the change that had invaded his own conscience.

The electoral success of the MSI in 1972 was received with euphoric enthusiasm by local neo-fascists. In a leaflet distributed in Toronto, celebrating the "VITTORIA TRICOLORE", local missini (neo-fascists) wrote:

Ever since that day when a great dream ended in the blood of betrayed fighters, we have been waiting for a new day. We have felt the pain of defeat and the humiliation of insult, but we stood strong because we have been certain that, although everything was crumbling around us, as a consequence of that ruinous night,<sup>65</sup> a new day would come for Italy and Europe. And we have waited patiently all these long years. We have waited for a signal, a song, or echo of a stamping foot breaking the silence of the night as a promise of redemption. We have waited either for Italy to find her face and soul or for the Italians to find an idea and a flag. Finally, from noble Sicily, from Rome, Bari etc. comes the first spark, the first promise of recovery and redemption. Italians have found, once again, the eternal value of their civilization by rallying behind the *Movimento sociale italiano*.

The future is now ours.<sup>66</sup>

The June 1976 election in Italy and the Ontario election in September of the previous year (in which four Italian Canadian socialists, Odoardo Di Santo, Tony Grande, Tony Lupusella, and Ross McClelland, had been elected to Queen's Park) created conditions profoundly different from those existing on both sides of the ocean in the early 1970s. The resounding victory of the communist party and the crushing defeat of the MSI in the 1976 national election in Italy, which provoked a serious split in the neo-fascist party,<sup>67</sup> dashed all the hopes of the right-wing leaders and extinguished the enthusiasm of local militant neo-fascists. It was the beginning of the end for the neo-fascist press in Ontario, although it agonised for two more years.

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<sup>65</sup>It is not clear to which "night" the writer refers. Perhaps 25 July 1943, when the Gran Consiglio Fascista approved a motion to give the king the legal power to dismiss Mussolini and order his arrest; or perhaps it might refer metaphorically to the long wait in political limbo; or some other unknown event.

<sup>66</sup>A "Speciale: Elezioni Italiane '72" issue of *Il faro* 2.5 (31 May 1972) was printed. In an exulting tone, the editors discussed in detail the electoral success of the "Destra nazionale." From this issue on, *Il faro* and then *Occidente* avoid using the word Fascism or MSI and refer to it as the "Destra nazionale."

<sup>67</sup>17 out of 35 Members of Parliament, 9 out of 15 Senators, 13 out of 40 Regional councilors, 51 out of 160 Provincial Councilors left the MSI and founded *Democrazia nazionale* (National Democracy).

No one regretted the termination of these publications. Since they had had no political party in Canada to dialogue with, their impact on the community was negligible. They were faithful followers of a "religion without a church." *Rivolta ideale* and *Tradizione* had a very limited readership of fewer than two hundred persons all together in Montreal and Toronto with Montreal commanding the largest portion. *Il faro* and *Occidente* mustered a larger readership because of their appeal to nostalgia for the country of origin and to anti-communist sentiments in tune with both Canadian politics and Italian Catholicism. When, soon after, Giuseppe Derin died and *Occidente* folded, only very few Italian Canadians noted their passing.

### Conclusion

This cursory analysis of the Italian Canadian radical press has shown that the entire political spectrum was fully represented, from the extreme left to the extreme right. Political and social events in Italy and in the international sphere impacted on the condition of Canada's Little Italys, stimulating ideological reactions and political initiatives among Italian immigrants. Besides their obvious ideological differences, the basic and most important distinction between the left- and the right-wing publications was the way they perceived themselves and Italian immigration to Canada, and this in turn stimulated their political activities and conditioned their relation with and within society at large, reinforcing their respective ideological orientations.

The left-wing activists viewed Italian immigration to Canada as permanent. Hence, they felt that Italians, being neo-Canadians with the privileges and duties of every other citizen in the land, should get involved in improving the Canadian way of life for they considered Canada their own and, above all, their children's country. Their papers were essentially created in response to the economical and social conditions existing in the immigrant community, even though initially they framed local conditions within their originally Italian cultural and political experience.

*Il lavoratore*, the first radical paper to appear on the Italian Canadian scene in the period under examination, mirrored the social conditions on site as well as the political alignments in Italy. Local collaboration between socialists and communists of the Gramsci Club paralleled the "united action pact" existing in Italy between the socialist and communist parties during and for some years after the Second World War. Socialist-inspired periodicals, *La parola*, *Forze nuove* and *Avanti! Canada*, were interested mainly in the immigrant workers' problems and in Canadian politics; their link with the Italian Socialist Party was tenuous and mainly cultural. It can



be argued that, in a certain way, these publications reflected the Italian Socialist Party ending the "united action pact," regaining its political independence, and entering, in a subordinate position, into the government circle with the Christian Democratic Party.

*La carota*, a scathing periodical with a quasi anarchist matrix unleashed its stinging criticism within the Italian community and, one might say, reflected the local and international student movement of the late 1960s and early '70s. On the other hand the orthodox communist *Lotta unitaria* and the reformist *Nuovo mondo* mirrored the fracture of Italian and international communism that emerged after Nikita Krushchev's shocking revelations at the XX Congress of the Russian Communist Party and the brutal Hungarian invasion of 1956. These publications were all, each from its ideological perspective, keenly and mainly interested in the economic and social problems of Italian immigrants.

The right-wing activists and their publications took an opposite stand. For them nationalism and loyalty to Italy was paramount—these determined their perception of Italian emigration to Canada and consequently their personal stand and editorial policy. The right-wing editors thought of themselves and of the immigrant community in general as Italians abroad, working in a foreign though hospitable country: "I have changed sky, not my soul" was the slogan appearing on the masthead of *Tradizione*. What happened in Italy was therefore of primary importance to them, while Canadian events were of marginal or of no interest at all unless they related directly to what was happening in Italy or in the international sphere of East/West confrontation.

*Rivolta ideale* was an anti-Semitic and racial publication with its ideological roots in the most extremist group of Mussolini's fascist republic in Salò. The crude anti-Semitism of *Rivolta ideale* vanished from the other three newspapers: *Tradizione*, *Il faro*, and *Occidente*. While *Rivolta ideale* and *Tradizione* were both parochial bulletins ignoring completely the problems of Italian Canadians, *Il faro* and *Occidente* were full-fledged newspapers open to problems facing the community. They too were interested mainly in what was going on in Italy and shared with their predecessors a visceral form of anticommunism and a marked social conservative stand. Most of their readers and supporters were mainly people who, for whatever reason—professional or sentimental—failed to integrate or resisted integration in the new country. There were however some potential allies, like pre-war emigrants and second-generation Italian Canadians, who supported the Progressive Conservative Party, but the violent verbosity of these newspapers kept them at bay.



The newspapers of these two groups were not monolithic. There were differences within each group and within each periodical as well. The ideas they expressed and the socio-political views they advanced were as diverse as the individuals involved within each publication and within the changing context of the Little Italys in Canada in which they operated. In the long run, however, the right-wing publications and their local organizations bore little fruit while the left-wing newspapers and their organizations left a more permanent mark on the life of the community as the results of the recent Canada-wide election for the "Comitati degli Italiani all'estero" (*Comites*) prove. *Comites* are local consultative organisms, which the Italian government recognizes as legal representatives of its citizens abroad. The election for the *Comites* was held for the first time ever in Canada in the Spring of 2004. The centre-left coalition won in every one of the four Italian consular areas: Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, and Vancouver.<sup>68</sup> This also reveals that the problems which the Italian radical publications debated in the last half of the twenty century still persist today. Although the approach may be different the issues are still alive and passionately engage a new generation of Italian Canadian activists.

*Toronto, Ontario*

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                      *Il lavoratore* (monthly, December 1958-61)

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<sup>68</sup>In the consular area of Montreal, there were 12,588 eligible votes. The victory of the centre-left coalition was overwhelming, receiving almost 70% of the votes. The centre-left list, *La nostra Italia*, received 8,717 votes or 69.25% of the total, the list *All'ascolto della comunità* received 3,260 votes or 25.90%, and the centre-right list, *Viva l'Italia*, came in a poor third with only 611 votes or 4.85% of the total. In the consular area of Toronto, out of 22,727 eligible votes, the centre-left list, *Progetto Italia-Canada*, received 10,958 votes or 48.2%, the centre-right coalition list, *Viva l'Italia*, received 10,129 votes or 44.6%, and a third list, *Unione Cristiana Italiani nel Mondo* (UCIM), received 1,640 votes or 7.2%. In Vancouver there was a combined list without a specific political orientation. It received 5,047 votes out of a total of 5,847 that is 93% of the eligible vote. In Edmonton, the centre-left list, *Progetto Italia-Canada*, won 9 out of 12 seats and the centre-right only one seat.

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FRANCESCA L'ORFANO

DONNE / WOMEN:  
CANADIAN FILM AND VIDEO MAKERS OF ITALIAN  
HERITAGE

In October of 1971, in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau acknowledged the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism's Book IV: *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*. He stated,

For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly [...] Such a policy should help to break down discriminatory attitudes. (Trudeau, *Hansard*, 8545)

It was here where the Multiculturalism Act, Bill C-93, had its genesis and then became law in 1988. Though multiculturalism has been nurtured both symbolically and through policy statements and legislation, both Himani Bannerji's (2000) and Will Kymlicka's (2001) writings provide ample evidence for the ongoing lively debate and the complexity of the "multiculturalism" experience in Canada and what "diversity" can mean both in words and in actions. As Bannerji points out, multiculturalism is not a thing: "It is a mode of the workings of the state, an expression of an interaction of social relations in dynamic tension with each other, losing and gaining its political form with fluidity" (Bannerji, *The Dark Side*, 120).

The Act, then, is a living tug of words and actions between diverse peoples. One of the continuing areas of tension for Canadians is that while some ethnic and visible minority groups have begun to receive more understanding and support in relation to the dangers of reproducing their stereotypes and how these can contribute to the perpetration of racism, Italian Canadians instead, continue to be marginalised. There is a silence in academic research that explores the problem of negative stereotyping from an Italian Canadian perspective. Most mainstream representations, both in Canada and in the USA, continue to reproduce many negative stereotypes of Italians (L'Orfano, "Challenging Exclusion," 2002; Italic Studies Institute, *MediaWatch*, 2001). Italian North Americans are constantly told that the overwhelming negative media reproductions are not



only supported in their representations, but are even legitimised with government financing and artistic awards. Recent Canadian examples are *Mob Stories* (2002) and *Mambo Italiano* (2003), both funded by Telefilm Canada and *Ciao Bella* (2004) funded by the Canadian Broadcast Corporation. American examples include HBO's *The Sopranos* (1999-2004) with its multiple Emmy Awards and its Canadian distributor, the CTV Network, and Dreamworks production *Shark Tale* (2004). With the issue of funding and distribution, then, we are therefore reminded of Smaro Kamboureli's "point of great importance, namely, the increasing awareness that the political and the cultural are inextricably inter-related, that they in fact inhabit the same discursive site" (Kamboureli, "The Technology," 209). As Carol Tator notes, "'Codes of Recognition' such as stereotypical representations are woven into radio and television news production and programming, advertisements, the print media, the visual arts, literature, the music industry, and the theatre [...] and communicate [...] powerful messages about the core values, norms, cultural hierarchies, and central narratives of mainstream society" (Tator, *Challenging Racism*, 5).

This article continues to build on the work of my MA thesis "Challenging Exclusion: Film, Video, Identity, Memory and the Italian Canadian Immigrant Experience" (2002). While "Challenging Exclusion" broke the silence and absence in scholarly writings of Italian Canadian film and video produced since 1955, it also began to analyse critically ethnic-minority representation, action, and agency, framed against a mainstream media dominated by the negative Italian stereotypes. Both Christopher Gittings' *Canadian National Cinema* (2002) and Kay Armitage's *Gendering the Nation: Canadian Women's Cinema* (1999) make no mention of any Italian Canadian filmworks. The purpose of this article then is to explore the representations in the films and videos by Canadian women of Italian heritage. While the mass media continues to disseminate one-dimensional stereotypical renditions of Italian culture, as noted above, Arjun Appadurai suggests the actual "work of the imagination" (Appadurai, *Modernity*, 4) is taking place in the margins of these sites.

The films and videos of Italian Canadians such as Angelina Cacciato (and Tom Trottier), Gabriella Colussi-Arthur, Giovanna D'Angelo (and Cristine Alexiou), Sara Angelucci, Patricia Fogliato (and David Mortin), Donna Caruso, Anita Aloisio, Daniela Saioni, Michelle Messina, Laura Timperio and Gabriella Micallef, Maria D'Erme and Sonia DiMaulo, and Josephine Massarella, will show that women as creators of films and videos speak from, and create distinct and complex spaces where, memory, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, family, identity and culture mingle and mix in a playful and potent choir of voices that are far from stereotypical. By devel-

oping an interdisciplinary frame, postcolonial theory, feminist theory and film theory, within the context of globalisation, will be used to continue the discourse over questions of subjectivity and representation in Canada. While acknowledging that filmmaking is an interdisciplinary art, for my purpose this paper will focus on a general overview of the works that Italian Canadian women have produced mostly in their roles as directors.

### Liminal Spaces

Postcolonial theorists Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall are interested in the experience of social marginality (Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 1990; Hall, "The Local," 1991). Bhabha seeks to conceptualise the overlapping, migratory movements of cultural formations across a global division of labour. He asks how can identity be categorised for those who find themselves in exile, between nations, where borders become porous and undefined. While he reflects partially on the myths, memories, and narrations of ethnicity that are carried forward, remembered, and re-negotiated through time and space, Bhabha finds that cultural identities cannot be scripted or pre-given. Within the "hybrid" spaces, the places "in-between" (race, ethnicity, etc.), or what he refers to as the "liminal" spaces, experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value, are negotiated and not simply constructed within modernism. Hall also uses the concept-metaphor of "hybridity" for his analysis of black diasporic cultural and aesthetic practices, where hybridity signifies the complexity of the presence / absence of Africa, to highlight the relationship of power and resistance to the dominance of European cultures and European nationalisms. For Hall the diasporic experience is defined by its necessary heterogeneity and diversity where identity lives through hybridity. As in Bhabha's case, the liminal space becomes a space of performance of cultural difference that also signifies the space where identity is constructed as multiple and shifting. Hence the 'coloniser' and the 'colonised' are not separate entities that are defined independently, but exist in relation to each other, and both at the same time.

### Italian Canadian Context

While Bhabha and Hall do not discuss Italian Canadians or their immigrant experience in particular, there are similarities that can be drawn from their theories of liminality and hybridity and applied to the Italian experience. As Monica Stellin writes in her preface to *Pillars of Lace: The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Women Writers* (1998), "for Italian-Canadian women writers the question is, therefore, not one of ethnicity, to accept or not to accept one's background; the question is how to bridge the ocean of

time and space created by the immigration experience" (Stellin, *Pillars*, 8-9). Reflecting and reinforcing Stellin's comments, historian Franca Iacovetta's *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (1992a), also includes an important chapter on the role of women in the postwar period. "From Contadina to Woman Worker" (Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 77-102) is a pivotal text that begins to address the role of Italian women in Canada and counters much of what had been written to date. As Iacovetta notes,

The transition from *contadina* (peasant woman) to worker did not require a fundamental break in the values of women long accustomed to contributing many hours of labour to the family. As immigrant workers, however they confronted new forms of economic exploitation and new rhythms of work and life. Women at home similarly performed valuable support roles and endured the alienating aspects of urban industrial life. Bolstered by networks of kin and paesani, women not only endured these hardships but displayed a remarkable capacity to incorporate their new experiences as working-class women into traditionally rooted notions of familial and motherly responsibility. [...]

Contrary to contemporary assumptions that women were little more than part of the male newcomer's cultural baggage, southern Italian women, like their compatriots who came from Italy's other regions, were active agents in family migration. [...]

The literature on southern Italy, which consists largely of the postwar ethnographic accounts of social anthropologists, emphasizes the segregation and subordination of women and virtually excludes consideration of how women's work contributed to family survival. In his study of a Calabrian village, anthropologist Jan Broger stresses the predominance of 'female exclusion'—a code of conduct that imposed severe restrictions on women's interaction with males outside of their household. [...]

While such extreme views must be rejected—indeed, a careful reading of the anthropological texts reveals that, as in most cultures, the actual practice of the villagers repeatedly contradicted the ideal types so carefully charted by academics [...] it is clear, as in the past, the patriarchal organization of the southern family and the cultural mores of southern society significantly shaped gender relations inside and outside the family in the postwar south.[...] A model of male-dominance/female-submission is ultimately too simplistic to account for peasant women's experiences in the Mezzogiorno [southern Italy]. It ignores the complexity of gender relations in Italy and underestimates the importance of female labour to peasant family production.

(Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 77-80)

In light of Iacovetta's historical study and the words of the women in both Marisa De Franceschi's *Pillars*, and Nzula Angelina Ciatu's *Curaggia: Writing by Women of Italian Descent* (1998), on the creative writing of Italian North American women, it is not a surprise, then, to find that second generation Italian Canadian women who are working as directors continue the "remarkable capacity to incorporate their new experiences as working-class women" (Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 77), in their role as filmmakers, within this context of the historical experience of Italian women in Italy and in Canada.

This historical context and experience is complexified even further by both Pasquale Verdicchio's *Bound by Distance: Rethinking Nationalism through the Italian Diaspora* (1997), and John Zucchi's *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity* (1988). Their works explore the particular Italian Canadian context and discuss the distinguishing factors that led to the formation of a strong, nationalistic Italian community in Toronto and to the shift in loyalty from the local level of ethnic and historical origins in Italy to their sense of belonging to the Canadian nation. Verdicchio especially argues that Canadian 'nationalism' often excludes the different identities that regional, social, and economic elements define. This applies to both the Italian nation as well as to the Canadian one.

The history of northern Italy's colonisation of southern Italy is important to understand, as it too used language, education, and homogenisation to assimilate southern Italians into a unified Italian state, therefore operating as a nation-state. As the need for workers increased, culture became secondary to the economic stability of the nation. Particular dialects and cultures were challenged and supplanted by the "Italian" language. As Italian emigration to Canada brought mostly southern Italians to this country, their history, their particular cultures, and their class stratifications need to be better understood. Verdicchio's and Zucchi's nationalism includes identity formation as heterogenous because the complexities of trans-cultural migration, emigration and immigration, from one country to another, result in destabilising borders, making identities no longer fixed or homogeneous. Just like Bhabha and Hall, Verdicchio states that new liminal and hybrid spaces are created where identities develop not only from the new nation space, but from a mix of previous national and ethnic histories carried by the various individuals to their new spaces / nations. There is a mixing and intersecting of multiple languages, cultures, with other spaces, and so the construction of culture remains in constant flux. It is here that identity resides. Like that of other ethnic groups, Italian Canadian identity is at first formed from a common origin, a shared history, and cultural and economic experience in Italy (or in the mother country) and then it transfers

to, and evolves in the new territorial space of, and cultural experiences in Canada. Loyalties and identities do not stop at the borders, for multicultural experiences and identities diverge from any 'limited' space.

### Cross-cultural Experiences

Angelina Cacciato, from Ottawa, and husband Tom Trottier are the team behind Act Productions. Through their work they have shown their interest and sensitivity to the difficulties of ethnic communities being unable to access space and time in mainstream media. Not interested in staying within the ethnic media that these communities perhaps have more access to, and being more interested instead in transforming the mainstream so that, as Robert Harney had suggested, it too becomes multiculturalised (Harney, "So Great," 1988), Act Productions established itself with its first major production, the series *Gaining a Voice* (1997). The project began with media relations workshops offered to community organisations and remained in development for nine years. The workshops sought to help members of minority groups understand the workings of the news media and present their issues, attitudes, and events in the mainstream media. The workshops eventually produced a book that was then used as the text for a television series. While the workshops were primarily targeting minority ethnic community groups, the *Gaining a Voice* television series addressed all community organisations wishing to gain a more direct presence in mainstream media. Because no other such series is available, *Gaining a Voice* is both educational and significant.

### Self-reflection

Like Cacciato and Trottier, who are interested in the ethnic community's access to mainstream media, Gabriella Colussi Arthur, who is also a language teacher at York University, uses video as a means of accessing the Italian Canadian community. She organised, produced and directed the video taping of three very unique round table discussions for the Italian Canadian community: *Mirrors and Windows I, II, and III*. The title reflects the challenge Colussi Arthur levelled at the community: to see themselves and these truths reflected back to them as in a mirror, to be self-critical, while at the same time to look beyond present conditions towards a possible future. All three videos hold critical information that can and should be used to relay to audiences some aspects, challenges, and successes of the Italian Canadian community in need of recognition. In 1995, a six hour taping of *Italian Canadian Women: Struggles, Defeats and Triumphs*, with keynote speaker historian Franca Iacovetta of the University of Toronto,



was edited down to 55 minutes. Through the words of various women on the panel, who came from various disciplines and sectors of society, a complex picture was created, as to the status of gender issues in the lived community in 1995. Going far beyond CHIN and Telelatino (TLN) television's often quoted construction of women in their various states of undress, *Italian Canadian Women* is refreshingly truthful and infinitely more accurate in its complexity. This was followed by *Italian Canadians and the Law*, in 1996. Here, the keynote speaker, York University sociologist Livio Visano introduced the panel to the cultural construction of Italian Canadians and the law. Unfortunately, because of funding cutbacks *Italian Canadians and the Law* has remained in its unedited version. It nonetheless holds valuable information that reflects the important issue of the negative effects of stereotyping in the Italian Canadian community at large. Specifically it explores the faulty perceptions of criminality in this community. The last in the series, shot in 1997, has also remained in its unedited version. It too is exceptionally valuable because it focuses on *Italian Canadians and the World of Arts and Culture*. Like *Italian Canadians and the Law*, there are distinct interconnections between arts and culture and the world of politics and law. The keynote speaker was theatre professor Domenico Pietropaolo, of the University of Toronto, who in his introductory address includes the critical awareness of the complexity of how the southern Italian heritage has been transported to Canada. These three tapings demonstrate Colussi-Arthur's sensitivity to the critical need for a community's self-reflection, beginning with that of her own gender within an Italian Canadian construction. Sadly, lack of a title for the two unedited version of *Mirrors and Windows II and III* makes it difficult for the public to access them. Yet because of their unedited state there is also much in them that, luckily, has not been left on an editing room floor.

### Gendered Experiences

Two recent films that follow on the work of *Italian Canadian Women: Struggles, Defeats and Triumphs*, are Montreal filmmaker Anita Aloisio's *Straniera come Donna*, and Toronto filmmakers Gabriella Micallef and Laura Timperio's *Instantanee/Snapshots*, both from 2002. For Aloisio, the theme of identity continues to be explored in *Straniera*. However, Aloisio extends this search to the mother country, Italy, while Micallef and Timperio in *Instantanee* feature interviews with women of Italian heritage in Toronto alone. Aloisio's film "is an intimate, lyrical journey through the experiences of second-generation Italian-Canadian women living in Montreal and [as well with] their Italian 'sisters' in the *Basilicata/Lucania*

region of southern Italy" (Aloisio, "Press Release," 1). The film was shot over several seasons in Montreal, Muro Lucano, Pietrapertosa, Potenza and Matera. It explores the experiences of eight women in different "phases of life, motherhood, career, creativity and Italian-ness, all dealing with various issues of progress, existence and identity. [The] testimonials are woven together by [...] Aloisio's personal, impressionistic narrative, which reveals her own inner need to explore her family's land of origin and discover her roots" (Aloisio, "Press Release," 1). Both films, *Straniera* and *Instantanee*, show how women, in various environments, negotiate their individual space and time within the contexts of family and work, in their roles as women, wives or mothers, and vis-à-vis themselves. Micallef and Timperio write:

Our intention was to allow Italian-Canadian women to speak their experiences. We did not seek a homogeneous faction of Italian-Canadian women but rather emphasized the diversity within our community. Why? Because it is this very diversity that prompts many of the questions, doubts, assumptions and judgements about our identity. Are we still Italian if our skin is not white or olive? If we were not born in Italy? If we do not speak the language? If we are feminist or lesbian? Who decides who is really Italian or how Italian [one] needs to be? (Micallef / Timperio, "Press Release," 1)

### *Sexuality*

In an earlier film from 1990, Daniela Saioni, of Toronto, like Micallef, Timperio, and Aloisio, also investigated gender, spirituality and sexuality which were part of her consciousness when she filmed her docu/drama *Rites*. In this film she explores, celebrates and challenges patriarchal doctrine, but not specifically from an Italian Canadian context, as Colussi Arthur and Micallef / Timperio and Aloisio develop. As Saioni writes,

I could never understand why a church such as mine (I'm Roman Catholic) holds so many doctrines which exclude women—the majority of its members! After videotaping several interviews with other young women, I realized I was not alone in my feeling of alienation from the church. We decided to make a film about it and wrote a fictional framework around the interviews we already had. This film is for any woman who has ever been told by her religion that she couldn't do something expressly because she was a woman. (Saioni, "Press Release," 1)

*Rites* ends with exceptional and moving footage of the International Women's Day March in downtown Toronto in 1989, interspersed with words by Canadian women talking about their personal experiences with

their spirituality, their sexuality, their feelings, and especially their freedom. Currently, as a complement to *Rites Saioni* is filming interviews with women who are in their eighties, discussing with them what they were told about sex, how they felt about their sexuality, and how they feel about it now.

Toronto's Michelle Messina continues the discussion of sex and sexuality in a different direction, with her 1998 short animated film *Fruitful Sex*, which uses real fruit as props and characters. A review on the film states "Audiences catching *Fruitful Sex* will witness a wedding carried out in classical Italian fashion. The happy couple has the blessing of such succulent guests as Blue Berry, Red Cherry and Kiwi Kiwi. On their honeymoon, Mr. Banana and Mrs. Orange literally multiply. After the loving, a seed jumps out of the orange and off the bed, representing conception. The seed becomes a bush which grows into a tree, producing a healthy harvest of banana and orange offspring" (Caspersen, "*Fruitful Sex*," 8). The film's lively and humourous playfulness hides what Messina says is its deeper meaning, "The whole message is to be committed, have respect for each other, and when you take those steps, it is natural to have sex and the whole cycle is complete" (Caspersen, "*Fruitful Sex*," 8).

For Donna Caruso, from Saskatchewan, her docu-drama *Doll Hospital* (1998) is far from playful though it too deals with gender and sexuality. She writes:

In 1978, I was twenty-nine when I had my first mastectomy. Thirty when I had the second. For thirteen years I lived without breasts before undergoing a series of procedures for reconstructive surgery, procedures which took two years to complete. That story, one of medical decisions, operations, and life changing choices, is part of my story. But only part. *Doll Hospital* is about my mother's inexhaustible love of being female, and how that love led me, fed me, saved me, helped me to find a way out of the darkness of being Venus disarmed. (Caruso, "Press Release," 1)

The filmmaker's own voice is used to tell this story for "maximum emotional authenticity." The childhood scenes are cloaked in a dreamy, glowing, and luxurious light with black backdrops, as the characters "move through memory [in] a world of richly coloured images" (Caruso, "Press Release," 1). In contrast, the "scenes dealing with surgery and disease [are] strikingly bright and dangerous; the glint of the silver scalpel and the beads of blood from fresh cut flesh [...] the nightmare mirror image, a terrifying shock. Places like the dressing table in the mother's bedroom as well as the pantry in the kitchen overflow with glass containers of all kinds and colours, rich, abundant, welcoming and warm" (Caruso, "Press Release," 1).

### Ethnicity, Memory and Grandparents

Caruso's more recent film, *Story Album* (2000), weaves stories and portraits of her Italian immigrant grandparents. Like *Doll Hospital*, it continues to build from the strength of maternal relationships and includes the paternal ones with Caruso's father and grandfather. Through the use of home movies and archival photographs, childhood memories and old spaces are re-entered, re-imagined and re-told in order to tell present truths. Caruso develops very personal stories continuing to tell them in her own narrative voice. This results in rich and poetic images that "honor the personal journey of those ordinary people who we call our family" (Caruso, "Press Release," 3). *Story Album* consists of two stories: "Customs" and "Lullaby." In both, Caruso explores the lives of her Italian grandparents.

In "Customs," Caruso recalls [her grandfather's] wonderful garden and the stone lions which guarded his house, images which imparted a sense of safety and abundant deliciousness to a childhood filled with strong family memories. But only in adulthood comes the realization that the grandfather and grandmother lived separately, long ago, when such things were never heard of. [...]

Although his parents were separated in life, after their deaths, Caruso's father plants a garden for his father and a fig tree for his mother. When both the garden and the fig grove flourish, the son takes it as a sign, as comfort, that they are reunited in Heaven. [...]

In "Lullaby," Caruso remembers her maternal grandmother's lullaby during early childhood when they spent years together, a pair of outcasts; the grandmother old and foreign, Caruso crippled and wearing a heavy plaster cast. But the real story was in the old photographs and the deep silences of the afternoons when nap time for Donna meant a time of reflection for grandma, who had left her beloved home in Italy to be with her husband in the New World. In her solitude and her sighs, the widowed grandmother tells her story, only later understood by Caruso when her own life leads to similar solitudes. (Caruso, "Press Release," 3)

In *Story Album*, the signifier of the Canadian space of the garden is much more than a place for growing vegetables for food, but a garden where the birth and life of plants does signify the communal relationship between people. The fig tree, for Caruso's grandmother, who had never wanted to leave her "beloved Italy," and the garden, for her grandfather, who immigrated to Canada. The reconciliation in the garden, the cyclical representation of the seasons of birth and death, is a powerful and dynamic signifying space for many immigrants. For Italians in Canada, the gar-

den represents a spiritual connection to people's lives from a past in Italy, to their present transplantation in Canada.

Two Ottawa filmmakers, Giovanna D'Angelo and Christine Alexiou, also using the theme of negotiating ethnicity through grandmothers. *Nonna* (1997) and *Meme* (1995) are also titled *Telling Lives: Portraits of Immigrant Grandmothers*. Both these videos were jointly co-directed. D'Angelo is of *Abruzzese* and Alexiou of Macedonian descent. D'Angelo indicates that she has worked with Alexiou on all of her video and film projects to date and has found that their experiences as 'ethnic' Canadians are quite similar. *Nonna* and *Meme* mean grandmother in their respective languages. As the titles indicate, from the beginning there is an awareness that these films are very personal, for they immediately acknowledge a genealogical relationship of grandmothers and granddaughters. Though it seems as if *Nonna* and *Meme* alone are the protagonists, and they do indeed dominate the filmspace with their strong views and with their laughter, both D'Angelo and Alexiou include their own voices to enter by allowing the questions they ask to be part of the sound the audience hears. Both films are very intimate portraits from the perspective of all four protagonists, even if the granddaughters also have a larger audience in mind. Each tries to convey the strength that the filmmakers discuss when speaking of their grandmothers. All of these women have strong personalities.

### Culture, Time, and Memory

In addition to *Nonna* and *Meme*, D'Angelo and Alexiou also produced a video titled *Hello Dolly* (1996). D'Angelo writes:

Christine and I worked on a five minute piece called *Hello Dolly* about a fibre artist who makes cloth dolls that are based on real women—either political figures or activists or female characters from literature or women that she met in a women's shelter. Her goal is to celebrate women—different shapes and sizes, different cultures etc. ... Our video traced the making of a doll as a loving—nurturing process—reclaiming what 'doll' is—the imagery etc. ... It was nice." (D'Angelo, Re: *Hello Dolly*, 1999).

Though it seems that women as filmmakers are apt to reflect the playful imagery of childhood, as do Messina, Caruso, D'Angelo and Alexiou, the messages their film and video texts convey are far from childlike.

Following on the theme of grandparents and childhood, and no less complex in their messages, are the videos of Toronto artist Sara Angelucci. Her 1997 *America il Paradiso* "addresses the complex and rich cultural history inherited by children of immigrants" (Angelucci, "Press Release," 1). In it, Angelucci explores her memory of her grandmother, as well as the



memories of other immigrants that Angelucci has received in writing via personal letters. It paints a portrait of the difficulties of immigrating and settling in a new land with its different myths and realities. Her video *In a Hundred* (2000) uses a child counting to one hundred to explore the place of memory and time. As Angelucci writes:

*In A Hundred* is framed by a child counting to one-hundred who becomes the keeper of time, the metronome reminding us of its relentless march forward. While the child creates the framework which guides the video, this progression is broken by other sounds and footage which lead the viewer back in time [...] Underlying this obsession with time is an examination of family via three generations of women; the child counting as the youngest, the video maker as the middle and the video maker's memory (via Super 8 footage),[as] the past. (Angelucci, "Press Release," 1)

Following the generational explorations that Angelucci investigates, Maria D'Erme and Sonia DiMaulo, of Montreal, with *In Bocca al Lupo* (1996), deal with an examination of family, tradition and culture. *In Bocca al Lupo*, however, focuses more directly on second generation Italian Canadian women and men who grew up in Montreal. The setting for this film is a trendy café in the heart of Montreal's *Piccola Italia*. What is wonderfully memorable about this film is the fact that, like Michael DeCarlo's *Fellini and Me* (1995), *In Bocca al Lupo* re-creates, through dramatic fiction, scenes from the magical filmic space and mythology of Fellini's film: *La Dolce Vita*. No other Italian filmmaker or film of the prestigious cinema of Italy has entered the psyche of second generation Italian Canadians as powerfully as Federico Fellini and his *La Dolce Vita*. As the scenes of quiet and calm wine-making in *In Bocca al Lupo* are contrasted with the trendy space of the café scene, there is the recognition that for the second generation this space is no longer just the space of the grandparents that lives only through the memories of both children and parents. Their space also includes the more powerful mythology of the film world and the high and commodified global culture of present day Italy. As in the documentary interviews of the *Mirrors and Windows Series*, *Straniera come Donna*, *Instantaneel/Snapshots*, and *Rites*, a series of interviews are the basis of this film's text. They are juxtaposed with images of traditional cultural events. The interrogation, as in Angelucci's *In A Hundred*, is on memory, family, time and the loss of cultural connections. Though childhood and youth are the focus of both Angelucci's and D'Erme and DiMaulo's works, these are childhoods that ask some significant adult questions.

## 'Canadian' Culture and Identity

Patricia Fogliato and David Mortin's film *Sons and Daughters: The Italians of Schreiber (A Scattering of Seeds: The Creation of Canada)* (1997) goes beyond Angelucci's and D'Erme's and DiMauro's works.

'They are more Canadian,' is how filmmaker Patricia Fogliato describes Italians living in Schreiber, a town of 2,000 about 200 kilometres east of Thunder Bay on the north shore of Lake Superior, in relation to most of those in Toronto.[...] 'And with the small town accent comes a lack of the snobbery and hipness that is associated with being Italian in large urban centres.'" (Pasquali, "The Italians," 12)

There is no preoccupation with identity, memory or angst for having lost one's culture. What we see, instead, is the assimilation of a lifestyle that is 'Canadian.' This film acts almost as counterpoint to their 1992 film, *The Good Life*, a work that questioned cultural identity and belonging, and reflected the same kind of issues and messages as *In Bocca al Lupo* and *In A Hundred*. The Italians of Schreiber are not concerned with these questions at all. There is still an earlier film by Fogliato and Mortin, *Enigmatico* (1995), that is, however, interested in problematizing Italian Canadian identity. Its message successfully parallels the round table discussion of Colussi Arthur's *Italian Canadians and the World of Arts and Culture* (1997) and, to a certain degree, *In Bocca Al Lupo* and *In A Hundred* as well. Author Nino Ricci wrote this about the film:

*Enigmatico* is an innovative look at the lives and work of Canadian artists of Italian origin. Interweaving poetry, painting, photography, music and sculpture, it explores the relationship between the immigrant experience and the creative process, broaching on issues of identity and culture that go to the core of what it means to be Canadian. [...] Filmed both in Italy and in Canada, *Enigmatico* moves between two worlds of its subjects with a rhythm that captures a sense both of celebration and of loss. Marking the contribution of a new generation of Canadian artists, it helps to point the way toward the future of Canadian culture. (Ricci, "Enigmatico Review," Video Jacket Back Cover)

One final filmmaker that should be included is Josephine Massarella. Her experimental works defy any ethnic association at all. Though it is possible to argue that she has assimilated her Canadian world, this observation is probably too simplistic. Massarella is clearly an artist very consciously working within a feminist mode and her works range from *Eve's Station* (2001), *Green Dream* (1994), *Interference* (1990), *No 5 Reversal* (1989) and *One Woman Waiting* (1984). In *One Woman Waiting*

"Massarella uses the fixed camera shot in her enigmatic film of a symbolic encounter between two women in a beautifully shot desert location" (Massarella, "Press Release." 1). Amongst those listed, Massarella's works continue to build from a gender base. *Green Dream* extends itself to concerns about the environment and the responsibility society should have. Massarella mixes experimental, documentary, and dramatic fiction with social and political concerns that speak with a voice that is female.

## Conclusion

The films and videos that have been briefly discussed are all quite unique and distinct. The Canadians who made them are full of creative ideas and have a deep hunger for story and culture. As these film and videos demonstrate, there are a variety of realities that Canadian artists of Italian heritage bring to light. They construct within an environment where postcolonialism intersects with the Italian immigrant experience, gender, class, race, and ethnicity. They live in complex worlds in-between them. This brings us back to Bhabha and Anderson:

From that place of the 'meanwhile,' where cultural homogeneity and democratic anonymity make their claims on the national community, there emerges a more instantaneous and subaltern voice of the people, a minority discourse that speaks betwixt and between times and places. (Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 309)

By using a variety of genres and contexts, distinct spaces are created where various concerns and identities are constructed. These include multicultural and multilingual realities, gendered explorations in both the public and private spheres, embodied experiences both real and imaginary, relationships between their ancestral heritage and their adopted country, experiences with assimilation, challenges with integration, and relationships to the state. The possible meanings and messages communicated through these works are far more valuable and dynamic than the limitations and silences often imposed by the negative "mainstream stereotype." This research supports a feminist and anti-racist stance. This is especially important in the effort to build a substantive and critical Canadian multiculturalism where "diversity can only be meaningful within the construct of social justice and equity" (Tator, *Challenging Racism*, 261). For Italian Canadians this social justice and equity is still absent.

Although the overwhelming albatross of the financially rewarding negative Italian stereotype (as observed by Bagnell, *Canadese*, 1989; Baldassarre, "Hunks and Hoodlums", 1994; Bonanno, "From Corleone,"

2001; Elliot, "Marketing," 1999; Harney, *From the Shores*, 1993; L'Orfano, "...Let's Kiss *The Godfather*," 2002; LaGumina, *WOP!*, 1999; Lawton, "The Mafia," 2002; Sturino, "Italians," 1999), sold by Hollywood conglomerates and their Canadian affiliates, continues to be a formidable opponent, these films and videos from the margins, produced by Canadian women of Italian heritage, have begun to challenge successfully the symbolic space of the "imagined community" of Canada (Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1983). This bodes extremely well for the national cinemas in both Canada and the United States that are being challenged to make room for Italian Canadian and Italian American representations that go beyond the one-dimensional negative paradigm.

Valuing and writing about the film and video works of Italian Canadian women is an "act of concrete reclamation"(hooks, *Art on Mind*, iv) that will help broaden and transform Canadian national cinema. More importantly, the language in, and meaning of 'Canada' will continue to be challenged so that it might reflect more equitably what Trudeau envisioned almost thirty-three years ago;

We are free to be ourselves. But this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued actively. If freedom of choice is in danger for some ethnic groups, it is in danger for all. (Trudeau, *Hansard*, 8545.)

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## RECENSIONI

Jennifer Margaret Fraser. *Rite of Passage in the Narrative of Dante and Joyce*. Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 2003. Pp. 255. ISBN 0-8130-2541-9 (cloth). \$59.95 US.

Zack Bowen in his Foreword to the book calls it “a provocative, elaborately plotted-out influence study, embodying womb-death imagery in a new and profoundly creative psycho-mythic interpretation.” This succinct paraphrase says it all. The book is more than just a book about Dante or Joyce; it is a work of intertextuality, or “initiatory,” where the author reads Dante through Joyce’s literary “eyes”, or, at least, traces in Dante specific imageries that have their echo in Joyce, principally, the rite of initiation or transformation from pilgrim to poet, from reader to writer, within the literary fiction, as well as the changes that readers themselves undergo in these types of self-reflective and intertextual works. Fraser’s focus is on the “inter” of intertextuality, the in-between zone of literary relationship, and on the changes and transformations that occur between text and reader. Thus, within the diptych relation established by Fraser, Joyce reads Dante in the same way that Dante reads Virgil. Or, which is the same, how one’s reading of Joyce alters our reading of Dante and vice versa. This is a highly creative book not just for the claims it makes but for the theories that it develops, such as the embryo canto *Purgatorio* 25, which Fraser claims, “is one of the most important cantos for understanding Dantean poetics” (43). The author connects *Inferno* I and *Purgatorio* 25, claiming that the “threat of spiritual and poetic drowning” in the first canto relates to the “fluid womb” in which the embryo first encounters God.

The connection to Dante’s poetics comes from contextualizing canto 25 within a series of cantos that deal with Dante’s poetics and, in particular, with Bonagiunta’s question to Dante in the previous canto as to whether he is “colui che fore/trasse le nove rime” (24.49-50). The mistake often made is that we answer yes to this question when the Dante that dialogues with Bonagiunta is no longer the same Dante of the *Vita Nuova*. Dante tells us this much in the *Convivio* when he attributes his earlier poetic production to his youthful period. This confusion leads to misunderstand Dante’s reply to Bonagiunta: “E io a lui: ‘I’ mi son un, che quando/Amor mi spira, noto, e a quel modo/ch’è ditta dentro vo significando” (24.52-54). Dante’s reply characterizes his new poetics which is expressed in the relation between “ditta” and “significando,” which marks the distance between the poetics of the *Commedia* and those of the *Vita nuova* and *dolce stil nuovo*. The difference is between two conceptions of Love as “dittatore” and “dettatore,” respectively. The poets of the *dolce stil nuovo*, which also includes the Dante of the *Vita nuova*, believed in a notion of Love as “dittatore,” as illustrated by the Paolo and Francesca episode of *Inferno* 5, whereas the Love which now characterizes Dante’s poetics is a “dettatore,” one that “dictates” a love, which is inspired by virtue, as it is also clear from the *Convivio* where the poet becomes the commentator of his own *canzoni* inspired by the love of Lady Philosophy. What is missed

in the confusion between the two types of Love is not only the fact that the Dante addressed by Bonagiunta differs from the Dante of the *Vita Nuova*, but also that the poets Dante encounters in *Purgatorio*, starting from Bonagiunta, and including Guinizelli and Arnaut Daniel, are there being punished because of their misguided poetics. As a result, one cannot construe any relation between Dante's poetics and the embryo canto in the next canto 25, at least not on these bases.

My assessment of the second aspect of this work between Dante's *Commedia* and Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* will be briefer because I am not a Joyce scholar. I shall limit myself to some observations that I feel I can make and this concerns the intertextuality between the two *via* the link poetic-embryo in the *Commedia* and a similar process in Joyce: "One of the ways to analyze Joyce's fiction as initiatory literature is to trace his reading and writing of Dante," writes Fraser (96). She goes on to say: "What I will investigate in the Joyce panel of the diptych is the specific impact Dante's concerns with intertextual initiation may have on Joyce's literary production. Both Dante and Joyce tell the story of their own writing process" (96). Granted that on her way, the author will undoubtedly shed important light on key issues in both Dante and Joyce, for which she should be complimented, it is to be excluded that what we will learn is about "their own writing process." At least not Dante's, as I have indicated. Maybe Joyce's, but this is also doubtful, especially when we consider that her reading of Dante does not support her claim.

This brings me to one more observation, before I conclude. Though I am a keen promoter of comparative studies, I am also aware of one important flaw in this type of exercise that assumes to find in the work of one author a similar process in the work of another. As in this case, the project fails because the theory is flawed from the start, even though there may be themes or imagery that the works of these two authors may have in common. To be sure Dante and Joyce may be compared in terms of poetics but in this case one would have to claim that Joyce is moved by a similar Love, which he probably was.

MASSIMO VERDICCHIO

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Sarah Dunant. *The Birth of Venus*. New York: Random House, 2003. Pp. 397. ISBN 1-400-06073-7. US\$ 21.95.

An aged nun has died, apparently of a painful tumour. The sisters preparing her body for burial discover, to their confusion and horror, that the fatal malignancy is nothing but a self-applied bladder of pig's entrails: "Freed from the body, it sat in the Sister's hand, a sack of distended growth, oozing black liquid out of one side like rotting offal ... The sack slipped through her fingers and splatted onto the stones beneath, bursting apart on impact and sending a shower of liquid and gore across the floor. Inside the mess she could make out shapes now: black coils and gobbets of blood, intestines, organs-offal indeed" (xiv-xv). The nun's naked body reveals a further mystery: the tattoo of a serpent coiling the length of her torso, with its tongue licking at the mouth of her sex. So goes the lurid prologue to this

historical romance, set in late fifteenth-century Florence. Readers with the stomach to continue find that it reverts to a more conventional narrative register: the first-person confession of this eccentric nun, as revealed in a manuscript discovered after her death.

The novel is a coming-of-age story of a young girl in Renaissance Florence. In 1492, at the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, Alessandra Cecchi is fourteen years old. It is a critical moment in the city's tumultuous history, marked by the rising influence of the Dominican monk Savonarola, the invasion of King Charles VIII on his way to Naples, and the resulting plague of syphilis (the *mal francese*). As the daughter of a wealthy cloth merchant, Alessandra must preserve her chastity and social station by making a rapid choice between marriage and the convent. Her decision to marry a wealthy scholar thirty years her senior opens the way to an unconventional life in which she tries, despite all the constraints on women in her society, to become a painter and to join in the movement of artistic renewal now remembered as the Renaissance.

In its focus on the visual arts as a mode of imaginative entry into the historical past, the novel develops a genre recently popularized by such writers as Susan Vreeland and Tracy Chevalier. Like many of these novelists, Dunant examines the historically marginalised relationship of women to the production of art. The heroines of such fictions often serve as model and muse to a male artist (in this case, the unnamed northern painter hired to decorate the family chapel). Most provocatively (if implausibly), Dunant imagines a woman who literally becomes his canvas.

Dunant apparently means to illustrate the degree to which women can be objectified in art and invent a flamboyant image for the creative reversal of this process. In fact the tattoo that Alessandra wears until her death implies a rewriting of the story of the Fall. Unlike the canonical image of the serpent in the Garden of Eden (pictured, in Masolino's famous rendering in the Brancacci chapel, with the face of a woman), Alessandra's serpent is indelibly male.

As the fictional biography of an Italian female artist, this novel most explicitly recalls *The Passion of Artemisia*, Vreeland's recent novelization of the life of the seventeenth-century painter Artemisia Gentileschi (itself adapted from Anna Banti's 1947 novel). In many ways, Artemisia's story was more complicated to tell: she did appear, however briefly, in the historical record and many of her most important paintings do survive—hence her biographers' practical need to balance (in Manzoni's terms) *storia* and *invenzione*. Dunant, whose heroine is entirely fictional, faces no such constraints. She does forfeit the marketing "hook" of a compelling visual association (like Artemisia's Judith), but compensates by borrowing the title of Botticelli's most famous work. This is initially puzzling because the painting hardly figures in the story (except as an example of the "pagan" works most threatened by Savonarola's regime). Eventually we conclude that the title refers more generally to Alessandra's gradual discovery of her sexuality and the related pleasures of erotic investment in her art.

This fast-paced and readable book culminates in several entertaining if vastly improbable revelations. As a fantasy of female empowerment whose heroine suc-



cessfully manoeuvres her way through a patriarchal culture, it addresses the concerns of contemporary readers. Though ultimately not a great painter, Alessandra Cecchi is an enterprising young woman who creatively negotiates a life between the available institutions of marriage and the convent. A popular audience is unlikely to object to the anachronistic focus on self-expression and sexual fulfillment. It is easy to imagine this novel accompanying (especially female) travellers to Florence, as George Eliot's *Romola* once did—but these two portraits of Savonarola's Florence could not be more different or more reflective of the cultures that produced them.

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Philip Sohm. *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xii, 315 ISBN 0-521-78069-1 US\$ 80.

In this book, Philip Sohm's enterprise is to take a philological approach not to the problem of style, per se, but to the contingencies of writing about style among the main literary humanists writing on art during the Baroque period in Europe. What Sohm points out is that, in writing about style, writers inevitably disclose, through their choice of language (lexicon and metaphor) their own stylistic biases, even, one supposes, while quite overtly contradicting themselves in the substance of their actual discourse. Thus, what is revealed about the period definition of style is chiefly what can be derived from textual explication, by looking at the most important writers on the subject; Vasari (who saw style in Darwinian terms of evolution and perfection), Poussin, Boschini and Baldinucci. As Sohm so succinctly puts it, "All definitions have an agenda, even those staged with philological clarity and convention" (168). So it is with "style," and all subsequent attempts to define, refine, and confine the vast categories of meaning the term itself embraces.

In the case of visual art, it would seem that the problem of defining artistic style has to do, on the one hand, with the insufficiency of language to describe precisely the visual and, on the other, with the tendency of language to define precisely that quality of ineffability in such a way as to make the definition almost always unequal to the experience of seeing. Perhaps Ernst Gombrich put it best in his essay on style when he pointed out that the frustration of developing a system of stylistic "morphology" is considerably hampered by the knowledge that "a style, like a language, can be learned to perfection by those who could never point to its rules" (*The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998, p. 163). On the other hand, as Sohm so succinctly puts it, style also "tells us what the artist cannot disclose" (15).

The explosion of style in the seventeenth century quite naturally demanded a new series of definitions, describing the way new art either fulfilled traditional cat-

egories of "style," defined by an affinity to the classical, or how widely it deviated from this norm. Faced with a new multiplicity of artistic styles, writers naturally approached the matter in neo-logistic ways or, as Sohm puts it, perhaps more satisfactorily, the period is marked by an ongoing "logomachia." It is interesting how these debates prolonged the somewhat "nationalistic" agendas of the sixteenth century; Vasari's extolling of the superiority of the Tuscan school, Lomazzo's Lombard leanings and the essence of Venetian *leggiadria* ("gracefulness") that seemed to pre-occupy Dolce in his *Aretino*.

This is a period in which Boschini defended the *macchie* (stains, blemishes, even "filth") of Tintoretto, at the same time that Poussin was defining the conditions of adherence to the "Grand style" (i.e. classicism, stoicism and sobriety) in the French school. Poussin's art visually expounded the qualities of the classical rhetorical mode, and was thus more closely allied to pre-existing linguistic forms than the mercurial, ornamented art of the Venetians. It seems precisely to have been the artificial, ornamented style of the Baroque, which grew out of the Mannerist period (itself a troubled term), that demanded a new lexicon.

Faced with this multiplicity of "stylistic" choices, writers, it would seem, settled on ambiguous language that could be both laudatory and accusatory at once. Sohm articulates his argument of the vagaries of language beautifully from Vasari to Baldinucci, ending with a wonderful chapter on "Indeterminate Style" with sections on "That Certain Something" (the "non so che") and "Vagrant Styles," the latter an extended examination of that wonderful word *vaghezza*, derived, perhaps, from the verbs "to wander" (*vagare*) and "to gaze fondly" (*vagheggiare*) and employed in the period to describe, in one definition, "an attractive beauty that induces the desire to contemplate it," thus reflecting something not quite objective or subjective, an emotional response that hovers indistinctly between the work and its audience. These qualities, embedded or implied in the art-writing of the period, provide a nice bridge to later preoccupations with the Romantic sublime. As Sohm points out, employed by various writers in the seventeenth century, *vaghezza* could actually be used both to praise and to condemn the artificial, ornamental aspects of Baroque art.

The "Appendix," which lists the stylistic terms most frequently found in Italian art criticism between 1550 and 1750, offers no translations, which is reasonable given that it is the precise meaning of these terms that is under consideration. The list itself demonstrates the logocentrism of the Renaissance and Baroque world, the very frustration that drove Boschini to invent the motto for Vasari's Florentine Academy of Design, a consortium of artists, "Academy of DOING and not REASONING" (59), indicating that artists were possessed of a different "visual knowledge" that stood in binary opposition to the articulations of the literary elite. Sohm has written a wonderful book that demonstrates the extent to which art and the language of art invented each other through the mediation of artists and writers on art in this crucial period.

*Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700*, eds Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. 257. ISBN 0-521-64146-2. Hardback, US.\$ 60.

This collection of essays, one of the latest offerings from Cambridge's 'Studies in Italian History and Culture' series, is the only volume so far dedicated exclusively to Rome. The editors of *Court and Politics in Papal Rome* have conceived the book as a synthesis of the renewed interest in diplomatic history, curial studies, and court studies as well as a foray beyond the curia to the informal contexts of court life under the pope.

One of the great benefits of this approach is an enriched understanding of the family and patron-client relationships that helped to define many of the political and religious agendas at court and to see how these relationships stretched like a web across Europe. Curial factions formed a significant element of these informal networks, so several of the essays in this volume investigate the arcane world of Roman factions and treat the complex machinations of cardinals and bishops to guarantee the victory of their faction, even if that victory came decades later under a different papacy. Despite these long stretches of time invested into factional agendas, Maria Antonietta Visceglia's essay shows how factions were also "dynamic aggregation[s]" (p. 102), endlessly sensible to changing politics, constantly adapting to the challenges brought by a new pope. Moreover, Visceglia demonstrates that the craft of mixing friendship with faction played a crucial role in cultivating a career in Rome. Elena Fasano Guarini's chapter—which treats almost twenty years' worth of letters between Ferdinando de' Medici in Rome and his family in Florence—traces the young Medici's apprenticeship in plots and schemes, and his gradual mastery of all the 'practices' of a successful curial courtier. Gianvittorio Signorotto investigates one of seventeenth-century Rome's most renowned factions—the *squadron volante*—and shows the evolution of its policies as the church expanded into an international politico-religious entity.

A symptom of this gradual expansion was the development of a well-honed bureaucracy at the expense of institutionalized conciliarism and nepotism. Marco Pellegrini argues that the 'spiritual auctoritas' of cardinals declined as fifteenth- and sixteenth-century popes assumed greater power for themselves and their creatures. The new breed of 'pope-king' left little room for conciliarism, so cardinals came to serve more secular functions, often as ambassadors to foreign courts. Antonio Menniti Ippolito and Olivier Poncet both follow the rise of seventeenth-century bureaucrats (the secretary of state and the cardinal-protector respectively), and chronicle the relative decline of the cardinal-nephew, a high-ranking member of the pope's family whose administrative skills proved no match for better-trained functionaries.

Faction and bureaucracy have interested scholars of seventeenth-century monarchies for some time now; French historiography in particular has explored factional politics and its relation to absolutism. In *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (1988), for example, Roger Mettam sought to challenge the paradigm of absolute monarchy by insisting on the king's reliance on traditional power structures and by stressing the crucial role of noble factions even in the most seeming-

ly autocratic regime. It is interesting to see a similar perspective brought to the Roman court, where a monarchy of a different sort was equally tempered and balanced by factional intrigue.

The reader of *Court and Politics* also encounters interstitial episodes in which the absence of the pope is the most compelling feature. Irene Fosi's chapter on the *possesto* ritual emphasizes the importance not of continuity between popes, but of discontinuity and novelty. Tensions from the previous papacy, she concludes, were quashed or at least masked beneath an image of the new pope's justice. On the other hand, when a pope removed himself from his civic and festive duties – as Innocent XI did for reasons of piety in the 1680s – tensions quickly mounted to a boil. Renata Ago charts the escalating disputes between sacred and secular authorities during Innocent's retirement from public view, and the secular nobility's appropriation of the festive scene during the pope's absence. Statecraft and religion were at play here, since the pope's absence was not due to prudishness, but rather formed part of an agenda to encourage widespread moral reform in Rome. The disruption of the papal court exposed the fissures not only in the ecclesiastical bureaucracy, but also in the wider socio-political edifice that defined itself in relation to the pope's presence.

Two very interesting chapters treat the literary byproducts of curial business. Mario Rosa draws a fascinating portrait of the cardinals' learned academies, a veritable training ground for young prelates, and of the intellectual cross-fertilization between academy and curia. The dissemination of knowledge was crucial to papal politics. Mario Infelise's chapter also touches on how the witty, sarcastic Roman newsletters and gazettes (*avvisi*) traveled abroad and even influenced international relations.

The editors of *Court and Politics* have succeeded in collecting stimulating works from a group of enterprising Italian and French scholars. At its best, this book provides the kind of synthesis of sources and analyses that reveal an unfamiliar facet of diplomatic history and shows the politics of early modern Rome in a new light.

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Reeder, Linda. *Widows in White. Migration and the Transformation of Rural Italian Women, Sicily, 1880-1920*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. 322. ISBN 0802037313 (cloth), \$65. ISBN 0-8020-8525-3 (paper), \$27.50.

Il lavoro di Linda Reeder, *Widows in White*, si propone di analizzare il mondo delle donne siciliane tra il 1880 e il 1920 aprendo una finestra su un piccolo villaggio, Sutera, nel suo impatto con l'emigrazione maschile di massa e i cambiamenti che accompagnarono l'espansione del capitalismo nazionale e globale segnata dalla divisione internazionale del lavoro. I contadini si fanno operai itineranti tra due conti-



nenti e le donne che rimangono, secondo la tesi della studiosa, si ritagliano nuovi ruoli personali e pubblici, e costruiscono nuove opportunità economiche attraverso l' oculato investimento delle rimesse dei loro uomini emigrati in America.

La trasmigrazione transoceanica incrinò l'identità del soggetto unitario e la rimpiazzò con un'identità multipla. Il caso di Sutera mette in evidenza come le comunità locali fossero legate a doppio filo con quelle nazionali e con quelle globali. Sutera diventa così "villaggio globale" *ante litteram*, secondo la Reeder, e le sue vedove bianche si fanno agenti attive, in rapporto con l'amministrazione dello Stato e il Municipio, per questioni di tasse, di transazioni, di iscrizione ai registri catastali, anagrafici e scolastici: un'esperienza che cambia la percezione della loro identità.

Le nuove responsabilità imposte dalla gestione delle rimesse e le aspettative di miglioramento sociale spingono le donne a frequentare le scuole serali per poter da un lato comunicare con i mariti emigrati e dall'altro misurarsi con la burocrazia del nuovo Stato. Questo processo di acculturazione elementare le mette in contatto con la cultura italiana più vasta, sponsorizzata dallo Stato unitario, i cui valori scopriranno non essere così diversi da quelli, patriarcali tradizionali, imposti "naturalmente" alle donne dalla consuetudine.

L'emigrazione maschile di massa è determinata dalla crisi economica che investì l'Italia e in particolare il meridione alla fine dell'Ottocento, dovuta al crollo dei prezzi agricoli e alle politiche economiche attuate dallo Stato unitario. Questa emigrazione, che tra il 1876 e il 1890 era stata modesta — il 4,3% del totale nazionale e il 15% di quello meridionale — tra il 1901 e il 1914 diventa, nell'isola, anche a causa della crescita demografica, un fenomeno di massa: il 13% del dato globale nazionale e il 28% di quello meridionale. La Reeder mette in evidenza come questa migrazione transnazionale fosse segnata da profonde divisioni di genere. Nell'Europa mediterranea, infatti, non solo in Sicilia, l'emigrazione era soprattutto un'esperienza maschile.

Il capitalismo globale non solo trasforma il contadino in un salariato itinerante, ma accelera l'espulsione delle donne dal lavoro retribuito. La Reeder mette in rilievo come alla fine dell'Ottocento sempre meno donne figuravano nel censimento come operaie o come braccianti. La sparizione del lavoro retribuito delle donne è concomitante con il declino dell'industria tessile siciliana a carattere familiare messa in crisi dalla competizione con la produzione di massa dell'industria tessile del nord.

Nell'immaginario del tempo, fa notare la Reeder, la Sicilia o il Sud sono "femminilizzati," accostati a un destino di fallimento, a una civiltà contadina arretrata, patriarcale e pre-moderna, identificata con la sorte delle donne "abbandonate," novelle Penelope di un mito che si rinnova. La Reeder mette in discussione molti degli assunti degli studiosi e dei pregiudizi dell'epoca, primo tra tutti il fatto che la decisione di partire fosse dei soli uomini. La scelta d'emigrare era una decisione del gruppo familiare, suffragata non solo dalla apposizione burocratica della firma delle mogli, registrata nella richiesta del passaporto, ma dalla disamina dell'istituzione familiare dell'epoca segnata dal codice dell'onore, patriarcale e matricentrica insieme, e soprattutto fulcro dell'economia contadina di sussistenza in grave crisi.

Che l'emigrazione costituisca la fase di un progetto a breve e medio termine, è



confermato dalla pendolarità della migrazione siciliana, segnata da un'altissima percentuale di ritorni. Lo studio di Reeder si focalizza su come le reti transnazionali riplasmarono e intrecciarono le relazioni tra la comunità locale, nazionale e globale e sull'importanza del "genere," come categoria euristica ed ermeneutica, nel modellare il processo. I soldi guadagnati oltreoceano non posizionarono gli emigrati tra l'élite sociale del paese, come sembra suggerire la Reeder, ma certamente aiutarono la famiglia, il Paese intero, a districarsi in un momento drammatico e contribuirono a migliorarne la condizione socioeconomica in un'epoca di transizione. L'emigrazione costituì l'unica rivoluzione silenziosa dopo le lotte, represses violentemente, dei Fasci siciliani che tentarono di incrinare il sistema del latifondo.

Secondo Giuseppe Barone, con le rimesse si assiste a una dinamizzazione del mercato fondiario che, anche se non da luogo a un'anelata democrazia fondiaria, permette l'ascesa di una nuova classe di medi-piccoli coltivatori diretti. A Sutera tra il 1890 e il 1900 la percentuale di donne che acquista terra passa dal 21% al 53%. Tra il 1900 e il 1909, il numero dei suteresi che opera transazioni terriere sono 1.321 mentre nella decade successiva scendono a 1.071, anche a causa della spinta inflativa che fa lievitare il prezzo delle terre. Dall'inizio del secolo al 1910, la percentuale delle donne che, invece, operarono transazioni nel mercato immobiliare aumentò dal 36% al 64%.

Tra i simboli del successo, grandi case e famiglie numerose. Nell'economia e cultura contadina i figli erano apprezzati come braccia di lavoro. Mediamente le famiglie degli emigrati erano più numerose di quelle degli stanziali e questo era un fatto voluto, di emulazione delle élite e non una delle cause, come io sarei portata a pensare, che determinavano la decisione di emigrare. Le famiglie degli emigrati cambiarono lentamente i loro comportamenti riproduttivi, diradando il numero dei figli, ma solo dopo il 1905, i tassi di natalità scendono.

Secondo la storica, inoltre, le donne degli emigrati generalmente evitarono di lavorare nei campi come braccianti perché disdicevole secondo il codice dell'onore e perché la crescita economica che accompagnò l'emigrazione creò nuove opportunità anche per le donne. Donne che, secondo la Reeder, svilupparono capacità imprenditoriali e avviarono modesti commerci resi possibili da un'economia monetaria in crescita. Nella decade 1881-1901 la percentuale delle donne impiegate nel commercio nella provincia di Caltanissetta passa dallo 0.6% all'8% per arrivare al 10% nel 1911 e saltare al 24% nel 1921. L'esposizione ad un'economia industriale che l'emigrazione facilita trasforma, inoltre, le donne in consumatrici dirette o le rende partecipi di una cultura del consumo veicolata da cataloghi e giornali.

Il lavoro della Reeder è uno studio molto originale e innovativo svolto attraverso una certosina esplorazione delle fonti e intrecciando metodologie quantitative e qualitative a informazioni di prima mano raccolte direttamente dall'autrice. L'opera getta luce su fenomeni poco indagati e contribuisce alla decostruzione e riscrittura di una storia al femminile quasi sempre letta attraverso lenti maschili. Il lavoro è una bella ritessitura delle maglie dimesse della storia. Tuttavia, alcuni punti meriterebbero ulteriore approfondimento e ricerca.

Lascia perplessi l'affermazione che la gran parte, e non una minoranza, delle donne, mogli di emigrati, diventassero imprenditrici avviando delle attività com-

merciali che richiedevano la conoscenza di tutta una serie di passi burocratici e abilità di gestione difficilmente acquisibili in quelle condizioni e in quella cultura. È certo, invece, che molte trovarono lavoro a vario titolo nel terziario commerciale che a mano a mano si andava espandendo, fenomeno che mette in risalto una delle più evidenti anomalie del sud e cioè quella di una modernizzazione senza infrastrutture e industrializzazione. Anche il fatto che le donne non lavorassero nei campi sembra essere smentito da Charlotte Gower Chapman, autrice di *Milocca: A Sicilian Village*, diario etnografico scritto alla fine degli anni Venti, la quale riporta tutta una serie di lavori stagionali fatti dalle donne. In questo caso, io prenderei i dati del censimento con le pinze o li leggerei con occhi di genere. Spesso, infatti, si confondeva il lavoro extradomestico col lavoro retribuito. Inoltre, è risaputo che il lavoro femminile non era riconosciuto e registrato nelle statistiche (tanto che il capofamiglia rimane sempre il maschio anche se assente da anni). L'antropologa Amalia Signorelli parla a questo proposito di "scotomizzazione" delle donne contadine da parte di censimenti che non riportavano o sottostimavano le attività delle donne, specialmente quelle delle non salariate. Riguardo, infine, al codice dell'onore che avrebbe impedito alle mogli degli emigrati di lavorare nei campi, questo, in una società di sopravvivenza, rappresentava un ideale normativo continuamente smentito e infranto nella realtà. Come certamente accadde tra il 1915 e il 1918, periodo lasciato in ombra dalla Reeder, quando le donne dovettero sobbarcarsi ai lavori degli uomini che si trovavano al fronte.

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*Il mito nella letteratura italiana. Vol. 3. Dal neoclassicismo al decadentismo*, a cura di Raffaella Bertazzoli. Brescia: Editrice Morcelliana, 2003. Pp. vii, 545. ISBN: 88-372-1953-9. 36 Euro.

Il volume è il terzo, ma il primo ad essere pubblicato, di una serie curata da Pietro Gibellini dedicata all'influsso della mitologia classica sulla letteratura italiana. L'opera risponde all'esigenza, più volte sottolineata da Gibellini, di dedicare all'argomento un'attenzione adeguata e capillare. Strutturato secondo un'ottica intertestuale che tuttavia rispetta la "più tradizionale considerazione del testo come espressione dello sforzo conoscitivo personale e corale dell'autore" (8), il volume consiste in una raccolta di tredici saggi scritti da un gruppo di studiosi che ripercorrono la vicenda della mitologia classica nella letteratura italiana dal neoclassicismo al decadentismo sia attraverso lo studio dettagliato di autori chiave che per mezzo di sintesi più panoramiche.

Nel primo saggio del volume, "Vincenzo Monti. Elogi, utopie e risorse della favola poetica," Vincenzo Frassinetti indaga la coscienza mitopoietica del Monti accostando a quest'ultima le categorie vichiane del "fantastico" e del "passionato." Analizzando con accuratezza le opere del poeta e soffermandosi in un *excursus* che si dipana dalla "Prosopopea di Pericle" attraverso l'ode "Al signor di Montgolfier," la "Musogonia," il "Prometeo," e la "Feroniade" fino al "Sermone sulla mitologia,"

Frassinetti descrive la lotta del Monti per affermare l'idea primigenia della sua poetica: "i diritti inoppugnabili della fantasia di fronte a qualunque concezione intellettualistica dell'arte" (33).

Lo studio di Marina Salvini in "Ugo Foscolo. Ellade patria dell'anima" procede su un duplice binario: da una parte si propone di illustrare e precisare la concezione foscoliana del mito e dall'altra di verificare la realizzazione del sistema teorico nelle opere del poeta. La Salvini propone un'analisi dettagliata dell'intera produzione evidenziando i momenti chiave della riflessione foscoliana sul mito e concludendo in modo convincente che "per il Foscolo il mito non è retorico e ornamentale, com'era nella convenzione settecentesca, ma diventa un tema sostanziale e qualificante, un concetto filosofico e, in quanto forma archetipica ed universale, assume il valore di una categoria eterna e metastorica" (62).

Nel saggio "Alessandro Manzoni. Mitologia come idolatria," Giacomo Prandolini elucida con chiarezza la posizione dello scrittore verso la mitologia, mettendo in luce gli elementi anticipatori della riflessione manzoniana sull'uso dei miti classici contenuta nella *Lettera sul Romanticismo* (scritta nel 1823), e scandagliando tutta la produzione del Manzoni compresa tra gli anni 1801-1810, il periodo cioè che giunge alla immediata vigilia della conversione religiosa e letteraria dello scrittore, "con il suo definitivo volgere le spalle al mito" (137).

Lucio Felici si occupa di Leopardi in "Giacomo Leopardi 'Vote son le stanze d'Olimpo'." Nella sua ricerca, iniziata indagando la produzione in versi compresa tra il 1809 ed il 1817, lo studioso sottolinea come per Leopardi, in questa prima fase, la mitologia non fosse "ornamento retorico, ma, come per Vico, 'un parlare fantastico per sostanze naturali,' un teatro di immagini antiche cui sono consegnati i momenti originari della storia del mondo e delle singole esistenze umane" (161). Felici segue lo sviluppo di queste idee sui miti analizzando le opere che vanno dalla *Storia dell'Astronomia* allo *Zibaldone di pensieri*. Lo studioso evidenzia come nel *Saggio sopra gli errori popolari degli antichi* Leopardi "avesse fermato il proprio interesse sull'analogia che accomuna il fantasticare degli antichi a quello dei fanciulli, non senza risonanze autobiografiche" (164). Un intero paragrafo è riservato all'analisi dell'unica canzone considerata "propriamente mitologica": "Alla Primavera, o delle Favole antiche." Nel paragrafo conclusivo *I numi avversi, la degradazione dei miti e il "momento" di Arimane*, Felici ricostruisce le tappe del definitivo allontanamento del poeta dai miti classici analizzando le canzoni "Bruto Minore" e "Ultimo canto di Saffo," le Operette *Storia del genere umano*, il *Dialogo d'Ercole e di Atlante* e *La scommessa di Prometeo* e l'inno "Ad Arimane." Si tratta di un saggio utile e suggestivo che attraverso un'analisi intelligente ed un fitto uso di esempi testuali svela con chiarezza come Leopardi abbia utilizzato creativamente i miti classici.

Ai due maggiori poeti dialettali dell'età romantica è dedicato il saggio di Pietro Gibellini "Porta e Belli—Smitizzatori in dialetto." Lo studioso cita le sestine di "Il Romanticismo" come evidenza di come Porta considerasse la mitologia "un'espressione efficace dell'universo immaginativo e concettuale della civiltà antica" (203), ma la ritenesse comunque inadeguata a "trasmettere i valori di una storia e di una cultura in continua evoluzione" (203). Proseguendo nell'analisi, Gibellini considera due componimenti d'omaggio del 1819 nei quali si sviluppa

l'idea già espressa dal Porta in "Il Romanticismo" "che la riesumazione in poesia degli eroi di tempi antichi provoca indesiderati effetti comici" (203). Analizzando i sonetti del Belli, Gibellini pone in rilievo come l'Antico belliano viva nell'archeologia e come la presenza mitologica sia "di rimbalzo." Nei sonetti il Belli si allontana dal mito classico "riproducendo, con la lucidità critica dell'antropologo e con lo sguardo affascinato del poeta, la nuova mitologia in cui il popolo con la 'potente sua fantasia,' congregava paganesimo, folklore e cattolicesimo" (217).

Oltre a capitoli dedicati a singoli autori vi sono anche nel volume utili capitoli panoramici che investigano generi letterari. Donatella Fedele nel saggio "La polemica classico-romantica. Verità contro fantasia" analizza la polemica fra classicisti e romantici scaturita dall'articolo di Madame de Staël "Sulla maniera e l'utilità delle traduzioni" pubblicato nel 1816 sulla *Biblioteca italiana* e isola cronologicamente i contributi più significativi. Nel suo *excursus* la studiosa fa riferimento agli interventi di Lodovico Breme, Giacomo Leopardi, Carlo Giuseppe Landonio, Vincenzo Monti e la nascita del Conciliatore.

Fabio Dandelon esamina, nel suo saggio "La narrativa dell'Ottocento. La caduta degli dei," quello che lui stesso definisce "il periodo probabilmente più oscuro nella storia della presenza del mito nella letteratura italiana, quello che va dalla fine della polemica classico-romantica alle diverse riscoperte del mito classico" (375). Lo studioso mostra come la mitologia nella narrativa ottocentesca si trovi in uno stato di "marginalizzazione" e come raramente contribuisca "ad un innalzamento letterario del racconto" (376). L'analisi del racconto di Vittorio Imbriani "L'impietratrice. Panzana di Vittorio Imbriani" conferma che "il riuso mitologico, per quanto originale e singolarmente vivo e ricco, rimane nulla più che strumento di gioco e d'irrisione" (414).

Altrettanto istruttivi e di alto livello sono gli altri saggi: "Giosuè Carducci. Mito tra passato eroico e bellezza ellenica" di Maria Salvini, "Giovanni Pascoli. Il mito e il suo crepuscolo," di Raffaella Bertazzoli (che è anche l'impeccabile curatrice del volume), "Gabriele D'Annunzio. 'Torna con me nell'Ellade scolpita'," di Sabino Caronia, "La poesia dell'Ottocento: gli dèi tra fuga e nostalgia," di Franca Linari, "Il teatro dell'Ottocento. Le scene del mito" di Carmelo Alberti e "La critica dell'Ottocento. Gli dei in esilio" di Fabio Dandelon. Due importanti strumenti di lavoro che consentono l'approfondimento delle tematiche trattate completano l'opera: una copiosa bibliografia divisa per ciascuno dei tredici saggi ed un accurato indice analitico.

Supplendo alla mancanza, più volte denunciata da Gibellini, di uno studio sistematico sull'influsso della mitologia classica nella letteratura italiana, questo volume colma la lacuna per il periodo compreso tra il neoclassicismo ed il decadentismo. La chiara ed efficace organizzazione dei saggi presentati in ordine cronologico e corredati da esaustive note, l'uso consistente di esempi testuali ed una esauriente bibliografia da utilizzare per ulteriori approfondimenti rendono *Il mito nella letteratura italiana* un prezioso *instrumentum studiorum* per chiunque sia interessato a questo tema.

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Roberta L. Payne. *A Selection of Modern Italian Poetry in Translation*. Montreal, Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. Pp. xxii, 199. ISBN 0-7735-2696-X. \$75 CDN (Cloth Edition). ISBN 0-7735-2697-8. \$29.95 CDN (Paper Edition).

With this publication, Roberta Payne gives us an elegantly written compilation comprising 92 poems by 35 Italian poets, published over the course of approximately 100 years, from the 1880s to 1964. She presents the original and the translation side by side, a format that allows the reader to appreciate fully the author's exquisite command of the English language and her close reading of the originals. The addressees, as she herself states, are scholars familiar with other translations of some of the better-known poems in the volume, the "casual reader of poetry who seeks a window into another world," and "students in an academic setting who are seeing that world for the first time" (xxii). On all these counts, Payne's book is highly successful and eminently readable.

In her Introduction, she explains that the decision to frame this period of the Italian lyric, beginning with the Unification of the country and extending to the time of the *neoavanguardia*, is to a large extent arbitrary, as is the selection of representative poems. Modern Italy has its roots in the Risorgimento and in this book, as in many anthologies of twentieth-century Italian poetry (see Edoardo Sanguineti [1969], Elio Pecora [1990], Lawrence Smith and John Picchione [1993] for example), modern Italian poetry is ushered in by some of the canonical writings of Giosuè Carducci, Giovanni Pascoli, and Gabriele D'Annunzio and, in some senses, culminates in the poetry of another famous triad: Giuseppe Ungaretti, Eugenio Montale and Salvatore Quasimodo. Interspersed among these conspicuous figures are the Crepuscular poets, the Futurists, the Neorealist, and other Hermetics, such as Alfonso Gatto. These authors are well represented, but Payne's book also includes several women poets, namely, Ada Negri, Sibilla Aleramo, Alda Merini, and Margherita Guidacci, who are excluded from some anthologies such as Elio Gioanola's *Poesia italiana del Novecento* (1986), as indeed are many other women poets. The volume concludes with a very useful Biographical Note on each of the poets anthologized.

Roberta Payne is masterful in rendering the full range of lyrical compositions, from the mournful notes of Giovanni Pascoli to the Orphic verses of Dino Campana. To illustrate, I quote a sample from Pascoli's "Novembre":

Silenzio intorno: solo, alle ventate,  
odi lontano, da giardini ed orti,  
di foglie un cader fragile. È l'estate,  
fredda, dei morti.

Silence, all around: only on the gusts of wind,  
do you hear faraway, from gardens and orchards,  
a fragile falling of leaves. It's summer,  
the cold summer of the dead.



Lines from Campana's challenging "La Chimera" are rendered with comparable finesse:

Non so se tra roccie il tuo pallido  
 Viso m'apparve, o sorriso  
 Di lontananze ignote  
 Fosti, la china eburnea  
 Fronte fulgente o giovine  
 Suora de la Gioconda."

I do not know if among rocks your pallid  
 face appeared to me, or if you were  
 a smile of unknown  
 distances, your bowed ivory  
 forehead gleaming O young  
 sister of the Mona Lisa.

The substitution of the capitalization at the start of each verse is a conscious effort on the part of the author to provide a communicative translation, as opposed to sticking to the "letter" of the original text.

Gabriele D'Annunzio's exotic verses are also rendered with adroitness and thoughtful consideration of rhythm, tone, and tropes. The haunting effect of the opening lines of "La pioggia nel pineto," for instance, is captured in its entirety:

Taci. Su le soglie  
 del bosco non odo  
 parole che dici  
 umane; ma odo  
 parole più nuove  
 che parlano goccioline e foglie  
 lontane"

Hush. On the edges  
 of the woods I can't  
 hear words  
 you say, human words;  
 but I hear newer words,  
 that drops of water and leaves speak  
 far away.

The author is comfortable dealing with Giuseppe Ungaretti's minimalist "Soldati," as we can see from the following excerpt:

Si sta come  
 d'autunno

sugli alberi  
le foglie

We are like  
in the autumn  
on trees  
leaves.

And she is equally at ease with the dense allusiveness of Eugenio Montale's poetry, as these few lines from "Vasca" attest:

passò sul tremulo vetro  
un riso di belladonna fiorita  
di tra le rame urgevano le nuvole,  
dal fondo ne riassommava  
la vista fioccosa e sbiadita"

over the tremulous glass  
a smile of flowering belladonna floated,  
the clouds pressed through from among the branches,  
the fleecy, washed scene / resurfaced from the bottom.

The Futurist experimentation of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Aldo Palazzeschi, Corrado Govoni and Luciano Folgore, which has been confronted by relatively few translators, is well within the competence of Roberta Payne.

The only quibble one might have with this fine anthology lies in the challenge of providing an adequate number of poems to introduce the essential themes and techniques of each contributor, especially for figures less well known to the non-specialist. Most amply represented are Ungaretti, Quasimodo, and Montale with 8-10 poems each, of varying length. Several other poets have two or three of their works reproduced, while 12 others appear with only one composition. Although there is great range of themes as well as styles, it can be argued that the reader will find it difficult to gain a substantial sense of the individual authors.

This consideration aside, Roberta Payne's book is a welcome addition/edition to the growing number of outstanding English translations of modern Italian poetry, which include the work of such translators as Jonathan Galassi, William Arrowsmith, Allen Mandelbaum, Joseph Cary, Ruth Feldman, and Edith Farnsworth, to name but a few. If her objective was, as she says, to "offer [the poems] not as a definitive but as a pleasant anthology of some of the best that is Italian both in the original and in translation" (xxii), the author has succeeded admirably. Indeed, Payne's translations rival the best that are presently available in the English language.

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Fabio Fernando Rizi. *Benedetto Croce and Italian Fascism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. 321. ISBN 0802037623. US\$ 60

Fabio F. Rizi's fine book *Benedetto Croce and Italian Fascism* closes a gap in the historiography on fascism and illuminates the gray area of tension where culture and politics, freedom and coercion coexist. In a broad ideological framework, this book may be placed within the revisionist movement initiated by the eminent historian Renzo De Felice. The aim of this school is to re-evaluate, in light of new documents and sober meditation, some aspects of fascism and of Mussolini's international and domestic policies. Within this perspective, the philosopher Benedetto Croce becomes somehow larger than life and, in Rizi's words, stands as the "symbol of the resistance" to fascism.

Apart from the introduction, Rizi's book can be divided into three main thematic parts. The first (35-79) analyses Croce's reasons for participating as Minister of Education in Giovanni Giolitti's government of 1920-21 and the turbulent years (1921-1924) when Croce lent his senatorial support and intellectual prestige to Mussolini and fascism, even after the brutal assassination of the socialist leader Giacomo Matteotti. The second part (80-212) explores the years of the dictatorship proper: from Mussolini's speech of 3 January 1925, that officially inaugurated state repression, to World War II, the period of Croce's prudent but firm opposition to fascism. The third and final part (213-267) probes the background leading to Croce's ministerial responsibility in 1944, in General Badoglio's government—a government in which all the antifascist parties, even the Communist Party, were represented.

In the Introduction, the reader learns that Croce was the heir of a wealthy family from Abruzzo that settled in Naples and became well connected to the local aristocracy. To his family's social status and wealth, Croce added his own high intellectual prestige and revenues from royalties for his many successful books. Further, in 1910, the king appointed Croce senator for life. Besides adding political clout to his strong intellectual personality, this position provided Croce with parliamentary immunity even when, during the fascist regime, Italy was headed by an anomalous diarchy, the king and Mussolini or, better still, Mussolini first and the king second.

Throughout the book, Rizi follows with keen interest the friendship and intellectual collaboration between Croce and Giovanni Gentile, the sagacious Sicilian philosopher. Together they revived Idealist philosophy in Italy carrying out an effective critique of both positivistic determinism and Marxism. Through the writings of Antonio Labriola and the activities of the Socialist Party, at the turn of the twentieth century Marxism had become a cultural and political protagonist in the Italian landscape. Initially Croce (as did Gentile) studied Marx's works, but he soon abandoned the study of economics, which he considered to be less important, to concentrate on aesthetics. On this point, odd as it may seem, the philosopher Croce and the decadent poet Gabriele D'Annunzio shared a common cultural matrix: the field of aesthetics.

Fascism, however, brought the Croce-Gentile cultural partnership to a bitter

end: unable to navigate through the treacherous, fascist political waters, their philosophical ship floundered and its helmsmen parted ways. Embracing fascism, Gentile theorized the use of the "manganello" (cudgel) to induce stubborn individuals to change their mind and become socially healthy, while Croce, who initially supported fascism, moved decisively in the opposite direction and defended individual freedom.

Croce's writing career during the dictatorship is thoroughly documented throughout Rizi's book. Croce continued to write and publish books, essays, and his biting periodical, *La Critica*, which came out every two months. In an implicit (never explicit) polemic against the regime, in all his works Croce maintained that freedom and only freedom is the true protagonist of human destiny. Because of his unwavering stand, he became a standard-bearer for the moderate antifascists who had remained in the country. Even during the fascist years, Croce's home in Naples and his summer residence in Turin were open to old-line politicians, moderate conservatives, scholars and students who sought his advice, help, friendship, support, and counsel.

A generous man of means with worldwide connections, Croce financially helped needy intellectuals and aided others to publish their books and essays. He wrote letters of introduction for scholars who, like Gaetano Salvemini and Arnaldo Momigliano, forced by fascist violence and racial legislation to leave the country, sought academic positions abroad. On a few occasions, he even appeared in court as a character witness in defence of antifascists accused of subversion.

Though "discretely" watched by police and spied on by informers, Croce was free to travel at home and abroad. He used this "privilege" to meet kindred spirits with whom he would discuss philosophy, politics, social affairs, and personal matters. He carried out these activities openly and with dignity even after fascists invaded his home in 1926, destroyed some furniture and papers, and damaged a few books.

Because of his firm stand, men of the calibre of Antonio Gramsci, founder of the Italian Communist Party, British philosopher Robert Collingwood, journalists Walter Lippmann in the United States and James Minifie in Canada, as well as other equally eminent men and women around the world, respected and admired Croce for his intellectual honesty.

Rizi details and documents all these aspects very well. Permeated with illuminating critical insights, the final part, particularly chapter 12, is the best part of the book. As a consequence of the disastrous war bulletins from all war fronts and the misery at home, which resulted in a series of industrial strikes, from the fall of 1942 the fascist regime began disintegrating. The supporting pillars of the system—industrialists, the army, the Crown, and the Vatican—looked for a way out of the collapsing edifice. At the heart of the regime, the Fascist Grand Council, the few dissenting voices grew to become the majority. The dictator had lost his grip on the country and the area where freedom and coercion coexisted became a murky zone: antifascists of all stripes became emboldened; the defunct Liberal Party was brought to life; clandestine newspapers were printed, distributed and read.

During those months, the aging philosopher experienced a resurgence of a

youthful energy and, as Rizi writes, "Croce was actively involved in political activities, mostly of conspiratorial nature" (235). After the Armistice, in September 1943, fearing a leftwing take-over of the country, the Allies under Winston Churchill's direction elected the old liberal class as the main point of reference for post-war Italy. However, as Rizi demonstrates, Croce refused to play Churchill's game, which aimed at maintaining the fascist apparatus by substituting Mussolini with the king. For his participation in the Badoglio government, Rizi says, Croce stipulated three conditions: 1) "abdication of the king and his son Umberto"; 2) "a government supported by all anti-Fascist parties"; and 3) an "expanded war effort to free the country from the Germans" (239). However, facing British opposition and the king's refusal to abdicate, Croce, a realist, accepted to be part of the government on the king's word that he would abdicate in favour of his son as soon as Rome became liberated. On the institutional question, helped by the new policy (the *svolta di Salerno*) of the Italian Communist Party, Croce succeeded in convincing the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale, which intended to proclaim Italy a Republic in 1944, to abandon such an unwise decision.

Aside from these and other valid aspects, however, in my view the book leaves the reader with the impression that Croce's cultural influence dominated the Italian middle class during this period. In reality, Croce's liberal thought lingered among highbrow intellectuals and never, neither before nor during the fascist regime, permeated the various sectors of antisocialist, middle class culture and politics. Businessmen, university graduates, middle and high-level bureaucrats, professionals, army officers, artists and poets were under the spell of several irrational and anti-democratic movements: nationalism, futurism, syndicalism, and the thought of Gabriele D'Annunzio, a poet and the preacher of Nietzsche's theory of the Superman in Italy, to mention only the most vociferous.

In their common anti-positivist and anti-socialist matrix, these groups and their iconoclastic movements recognized a remote paternity in Croce's thought. These anti-democratic movements imposed on the country their political agenda against his liberal teaching: the invasion of Libya in 1911, the Great War in 1915, the Fiume adventure in 1919, fascism in 1922 and its several violent convulsions till its tragically grotesque epilogue in the fascist Republic of Salò.

In the early 1920s, the eighty-year-old Giolitti and his liberal clan, which included Croce, encouraged and fostered these irrational trends as a way to bar the socialists from power. In the election of 1921, Giolitti (whom Salvemini rightly branded as the minister "della mala vita") created the "national blocks," an ambiguous alliance among unscrupulous liberals, democrats, and fascists. Thanks to this electoral gimmick, Mussolini succeeded where he had failed twice before (as a socialist in 1913 and as a fascist in 1919): he was elected to Parliament. Further, the liberal clan supported Mussolini and his governments in Parliament and in the Senate up until the end of 1924.

Benedetto Croce and Italian Fascism also does not, in my view, address adequately at least two important and interdependent questions: 1) why Croce enjoyed relative freedom of speech and movement; and 2) why Croce (and the few liberal senators) "returned" or "donated" his senatorial gold medal for the



Ethiopian cause in 1936. In answering the first question, Rizi writes: "Mussolini did not engage in direct and extreme persecution of Croce primarily out of political considerations but also, perhaps, because he regarded the great man with a certain respect" (212). The reason for the regime's special treatment of Croce can be found more likely in the fact that Croce's living-room antifascism had no link with real life and politics, so Mussolini considered it innocuous "Platonic" talk. Long before fascism, Labriola reproached Croce for his lack of interest in the miserable condition of working people. In a letter, Labriola wrote, "Regarding the politics of the proletariat, you are neither for nor against (*"né convieni né disconvieni"*), and choose to ignore 95% of the people and their problems." He added, "since your interest in Marxism is merely theoretical, you avoid being associated with people for whom Marxism and anti-Marxism [Proletariat versus Capitalism or Socialism versus Fascism] are symbols and banners" of a cause.

On this point, it may not be too far-fetched to argue, as Denis Mack Smith has done, that fascism and the liberal clan or Mussolini and Croce arrived at what might be considered an armed truce. They both stood one step away from that unmarked area where the theory incarnates itself in practical activity or politics and politics or practical activity finds its reason for being in the theory: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John). The regime safeguarded its political agenda by "discreetly" keeping an eye on Croce; and Croce "prudently" preached freedom in the abstract. In the same way that Gramsci (who was in a fascist jail) avoided censorship by using the phrase *"filosofia della prassi"* instead of Marxism, Croce avoided provoking the regime by using phrases like "authoritarian movements," "anti-historicism" or "irrationalism," instead of the word "fascism." Both Croce and Mussolini observed the mutually convenient and unmarked dividing line, separating theory and practice.

Within this framework we can also place the episode of the gold medal that Croce returned for the Ethiopian campaign. Citing Croce's patriotism or the semantic quibbles between the words "donated" used by fascist propaganda and "returned" used by Croce, as Rizi does, does not explain Croce's behaviour. Unlike philosophy, in politics, specifically in this case, what counts is the action not the semantic distinction between the subtle meanings of the words in question. It is more likely that Croce and his liberal senator friends did not want to provoke the regime and "prudently" acquiesced to the "order" politely imparted by the President of the Senate, Luigi Federzoni, who diplomatically "asked" senators to give their golden medal to the cause. Though perhaps secretly, Croce (they all) approved of a popular imperial conquest as he had done in the Libyan war of 1911-12.

Given that no book is ever exempt from some form of questioning, no matter how fine the book may be, Rizi's work makes an important contribution to Croce studies. With a wealth of old and new materials, it documents Croce's many cultural and extra-cultural activities during the fascist dictatorship: his towering personality (firm character, ethical standard, and dignity as a thinker, a public figure, and a private man) emerges clear and tall. Benedetto Croce and Italian Fascism is thus essential reading for anyone interested in Croce's life and thought,

fascism and the maze of its domestic policy, as well as the cultural and political history of Italy and Europe.

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Claudio Fogu. *The Historic Imaginary: Politics of History in Fascist Italy*. Toronto Buffalo London: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. x, 288 ISBN 0802087647. \$65 CND (cloth).

Claudio Fogu's book is a very interesting addition to the corpus of cultural studies on the politics of culture and history in fascist Italy. The main purpose of this volume is to study the "fascist politics of history in 1920s and 1930s Italy in order to show the centrality of this field of cultural production to the formation and evolution of a fascist-modernist mass culture" (6–7). Fogu defines the "politics of history," as "the vision of the relationship between historical agency, representation, and consciousness elaborated by fascist ideologists, and its institutionalization into mental, discursive, and visual images designed for mass consumption" (7). This conceptualization shows the necessity of bringing together a variety of disciplines, such as history, philosophy, anthropology, and to some extent literature, in order to understand Mussolini's vision and his wish to reshape not only Italy but, indeed, Italians during his dictatorship. Such a conceptualization is the key to understanding the dictator's legacy to a country still in formation as well as his legacy to Italians still trying to understand their role in the newly unified nation after the *Risorgimento*.

At the core of Fogu's study is the construction of a fascist imaginary in its complex array of images and words. Museums, exhibitions, and archives are among the favourite sites of research Fogu deems appropriate for defining the connections between the politics of history and the construction of such a collective imaginary in which the visual played an extraordinary role. Fogu argues convincingly that Fascism, as a "historic agent" that conflates the concepts of history and historiography, appears reified in Giovanni Gentile's theory of Fascism. Gentile's reformulations of actualism constitute a theory that, according to Fogu, intellectualizes Mussolini's sense of politics and history as encapsulated in the dictator's famous motto: "Fascism makes history; it does not write it."

This is an ambitious volume whose purpose is to tie Mussolini's genuine interest in the arts to a higher ideology (in an intellectual sense). The Duce's effort, joined in this by his entourage of intellectuals, was geared toward the pragmatic construction of a mentality that would bring conformity to the average Italian by utilizing some of the "higher" criteria for a more available system of ethics and aesthetics. With this in mind, a collective imaginary would be created for the Italian population, and this would happen regardless of geographical differences. Within such a horizon, Fascism would constitute the key to understanding the present.

In this text, fascist ideology is thus perceived as an indispensable tool for

rereading the recent past, namely the *Risorgimento*, as well as antiquity, that is Rome and its empire. Also, the relationship between such a varied "past" to history in the making, which Mussolini so strongly promulgated, was an important element of that imaginary. History and theory are at the core of Fogu's work almost per force, as one implies the other, since his aim is the construction of what he calls a "poetics of history underlying fascist ideology."

Connecting the ideologists of the fascist aesthetic to the theory of history, Fogu draws differences between Nazi and fascist politics of history, and in doing so, successfully demonstrates how their scope was entirely different. According to the author, Nazi politics was projected towards the future and, as a result, imposed normative notions on what Nazi art should be, namely, a tool for the implementation of the regime. In the case of the fascists, the emphasis was on the past. The events of the previous centuries thus became a unifying factor in which art had the mandate of giving *style* to the Italian masses, while glorifying history in the making (23). Fogu states that, "fascism celebrated its historicness by institutionalizing a historic mode of representation at all levels of visual and ritual mass culture" (10). Further, he clarifies how, "the institutionalization of fascist historic culture led to, and was sustained by, the formation of a collective historic imaginary that was at the root of fascism's mass appeal and the intellectual challenge that observers, such as Bataille, recognized in the fascist politics of history" (10).

Chapters One and Two, "History Belongs to the Present" (21–51) and "Il Duce Taumaturgo" (52–71), are devoted to explaining the rise of Mussolini's theorization of history as present, as "process-in-the-making." Mussolini's closeness to avant-garde groups certainly ignited his spirit; the influence can be seen in his conceptualization of the identity of art and politics. This union of art and the state followed his cultural politics throughout his entire dictatorship and contributed to his own rise. *Critica fascista*, the intellectual review, was Mussolini's chief information medium for bringing artistic and other intellectual forces into his debate on the most efficient means for expressing his aesthetic creed (22). Fogu performs a very interesting reading of both how Fascism saw the *Risorgimento* and how Giovanni Gentile, the Duce's philosopher, contributed to revisiting the legacy of one of the leaders of *Risorgimento*, Giuseppe Mazzini. In Gentile's writings, in fact, Mazzini becomes an anticipator of Fascism. The thinker's elaboration of his philosophy on actualism served as the basis for this newly formed image of Mazzini (27). Gioacchino Volpe's subsequent *L'Italia in cammino* is another step towards the theorization of a "fascist's social integration of the Italian masses, but in a state built up by the liberal leadership" (29). In all his speeches Mussolini attempted to "simultaneously enact and historicize a modernist form of mass consciousness in which language and force had abandoned the realm of historical crisis and entered that of historic eventfulness" (35). Chapter one continues with a more expansive analysis of Gentile's elaboration of actualism in his 1912 essay, "L'atto del pensare come atto puro."

Chapter two analyzes the ways in which the regime sought to "exorcise" the trauma of war, a process that the fascists quickly managed to organize around the veterans' sufferings. Fogu underscores the central role of Antonio Monti, head

archivist and curator of the *Museo del Risorgimento* in Milan, in the construction of a public image for Mussolini as a saviour of the WWI veterans and, by extension, of all Italians. The dictator was to be perceived as the "Man of Providence," sent by God to accomplish what was left undone by the *Risorgimento*. Far from being depicted as they are in Otto Dix's horrifying representations of prosthetics, the war wounded are transfigured into "recipient(s) of Mussolini's thaumaturgic touch" (54). Mussolini is depicted as a remedy, then, to the injustice of "bourgeois hypocrisy." The dictator becomes the leitmotiv of propaganda and the myth of "Mussolini," or *mussolinismo* as "fascism's autonomous double" (56) is born. Celebrations of the march on Rome are held every year to mark the "emergence of a historic agent in history" (55). The public image Monti constructs for Mussolini appears thus to be fundamental to the passage from a spontaneous fascination with the man, *mussolinismo*, to the artfully constructed cult of the Duce, *ducismo*, for, as Fogu points out, Monti's *Duce Taumaturgo* represents the fascist *hypericon*, "an image that speaks of the nature of historical representation during fascism" (57), or something of a metaphor for the whole, as this image captures the essence of the whole.

Monti was also essential to the revision of the *Risorgimento* via his clear vision of the way *Risorgimento* museums should be, that is, the criteria to be used for their collections and expositions. He carefully revised the frame within which visitors would understand the historical recent past and connect with the Duce's rise to power (63–65). The *Risorgimento* was not a disaster, certainly, but something incomplete that awaited the Duce to bring about its completion and an age of splendour. The true unification of Italy was in fact to be carried out by Fascism, and Mussolini in particular. According to Fogu, this epochal fusion of the *Risorgimento* and the Great War did not take place. In fact, this lack of what the museotechnocrat Monti hoped for shows a larger psychological Lacanian "lack" in the Italian collectivity; that is, the failure to absorb the traumatic events whose consequences were so apparent in German art.

Chapter three, "The Historic Spectacle," deals with the celebrations of the Garibaldi jubilee (72–95). The introduction to mass media is marked by Mussolini's speech of June 4, 1932. This speech, which concluded the celebrations with the unveiling of Anita Garibaldi's monument, was an eloquent complement to the Roman parade, a complex apparatus of the fascist spectacle which, the author holds, makes clear how such a celebratory event was "to represent the constitution of fascism as a *historic agent*" under whose rhetorical umbrella the Garibaldian past was reconceived in terms of the present history-in-the-making.

In Chapter four, "The Historic Imaginary and the Mass Media" (96–113), Fogu shows how the "transfiguration" of the *celebrazioni garibaldine* became possible thanks to a powerfully orchestrated series of events conceived largely for a "mass media reproduction" (97). Many factors account for such a transfiguration, among which are the invitation of seventy-five journalists to Mussolini's inaugural speech and the speech itself. Fogu provides a significant appendix in which texts from forty-five newspapers appear. The author also discusses the important role that the occasion had in the productions of LUCE, in the form of three newsreels



and two documentaries (105–13). Fogu notes how, “[t]he appearance of LUCE operators at every commemorative event thus announced the presence of a powerful rival that no newspapers could ignore, especially because of the novelty of sound film” (105).

More importantly, the spectacle of the *cinquantenario* is linked to that of the *decennale fascista*, ultimately marking the ideal point where the gap between the figure of Garibaldi and that of Mussolini is bridged. The *Mostra garibaldina* and the *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista* are parallel in their importance for the “institutionalization of fascist historic culture” (113).

In Chapter five, “The Context of the Exhibitions” (114–64) we find a complete rendering of the exhibitions that took place during Mussolini’s dictatorship. Following the relatively brief tradition of the World’s Fairs in Turin and Rome, the didactic intent of these exhibitions was apparent to the public and conveyed a clear sense of Mussolini’s beliefs, particularly in the light of Italy’s recent entry on the imperialistic map.

In the sixth chapter, “Fascist Historic Culture’ (164–89) Fogu analyzes the various fascist exhibitions. However, supported by Gentile’s actualist vision of history, “the fascist historic imaginary had not remained faithful to any of its original traits” (196), resulting in the severing of the connection Mussolini envisioned between his own myth and that of the fascist imaginary. The museification of the past and present was probably the most evident cause for the lack of this hoped-for connection. As Fogu states, “contrary to Gentile’s prediction [...] the fascist mind had reoriented itself from history belonging to the past to history into the future with the advent of *stile littorio* against fascist modernism” (197). Also, and more importantly, the failure to reach Mussolini’s goals was due to the previous failure of the post-*Risorgimento* era to nationalize the Italian masses.

In conclusion, Fogu’s theoretical and pragmatic approach to the study of fascist culture linked with a poetics of history, is a new way of looking at Fascism and its attempt to construct a collective imaginary based on present history, while starting from a very diversified past. Rich in sources and original in its approach, this study is a brilliant reconsideration of fascist culture from a different and unbiased angle. Fogu’s thesis is interesting as is his elaborate commentary on the artistic productions for the masses that Fascism managed to generate in twenty years of Italian history. These are not many, if one thinks of the history of our country but sufficient to spark debates, the traces of which are still visible in the Italian present collective imaginary. This is not a revisionist book in terms of “normalizing” the fascist years. It is not the author’s intent, I believe. Fogu’s objective is, instead, to diversify and make more complex an intellectual panorama that we see treated sometimes in ways that too easily discuss that panorama in almost structuralistic terms, as if binary oppositions could suffice to draw the map of Fascism.

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This full-colour, trilingual (Italian, English, French) volume, which offers the reader an impressive panorama of all the regions of Italy, is the product of an initiative promoted by the Ministro per gli Affari Regionali and the resulting collaboration with the individual regions themselves. In his introduction, Minister of Regional Affairs Sen. Enrico La Loggia explains that, "mentre l'Europa si prepara, nel contesto del semestre europeo di presidenza italiana, a discutere del suo futuro prossimo, del suo rapporto con i paesi e le entità che la formano, le Regioni italiane hanno voluto rendere testimonianza, con una manifestazione culturale unitaria, a latere della riunione dei ministri europei responsabili delle autonomie regionali, ai loro valori culturali, ai simboli nei quali il proprio territorio si riconosce e dove è riconoscibile nel contempo il valore culturale della nazione Italia" (8).

The book amply satisfies this objective by offering both the student and instructor of Italian a series of "chapters" in alphabetical order by region. From l'Abruzzo to il Veneto, in each chapter, the region's historical and cultural profile is documented textually and photographically within a space of eight to ten pages. What follows is a section intitled "Bene Simbolo," comprised of three or four pages, which presents a "symbol" (either a specific place or an object found within the region) which each region deemed to be reflective of its past, present and future: "alcune Regioni si erano già poste l'obiettivo di caratterizzare il proprio territorio con un simbolo che ne condensasse la storia e la cultura; per alcune altre è stata l'occasione per riflettere esse stesse su cosa meglio le indentificasse presso i propri cittadini, i connazionali, l'Europa tutta" (12). From Aquileia in Friuli Venezia Giulia to the Sicilian sculpture *Il Satiro danzante*, the symbolic icons chosen by the regions quite accurately reflect the words of Senator La Loggia: "L'Italia vive la sua esperienza unitaria soltanto da poco più di un secolo, ma vanta una "anzianità culturale" che pochi paesi al mondo hanno" (6).

Each chapter closes with the section "Informazioni." On this page the reader finds a list of the region's *province* (as well as their coat of arms), the region's population and geographical statistics (for example, total area and percentage of mountainous and coastal areas) and finally, the region's office and Internet address. Among the volume's comprehensive yet concise descriptions of the cultural and historical richness of each region are a dozen or so spectacular photographs that complement the text beautifully.

Although it is directed to the general reader conversant in any of the three languages in which the text is written and to the European Union countries, *Italia, territori, culture* also has good potential as a textbook. The didactic options for this publication are numerous, but they are also contingent on its availability and cost. There is no information included within the volume regarding these two very important factors to consider when evaluating the viability of a course text. Students enrolled in a course (offered in any of volume's languages) which presents

different aspects of Italian culture (or even a higher level Italian language course which incorporates a cultural component), could make efficacious use of this publication. There are a few *infelicità linguistiche* in the English and French translations and it should be noted that the Italian used here is quite formal—this is after all, a “government” publication, not an Italian as a Second Language text. From a purely linguistic standpoint, it would be most suitable for advanced students of Italian language. This having been said, the utility of the available translations should not, however, be ignored when considering this book for an Intermediate language course.

In conclusion, *Italia, territori, culture* offers a wealth of information and images that would most certainly enrich a student’s knowledge and appreciation for Italian history and culture. This publication clearly demonstrates that, although Italy is a full and willing partner in the European community, its geographical boundaries encompass an infinity of distinct linguistic, cultural and regional traditions.

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*Quaderni d'italianistica* appears twice a year and publishes articles in Italian, English or French. Manuscripts should not exceed 30 typewritten pages, double spaced, and should be submitted in duplicate plus diskette. In preparing manuscripts contributors are requested to follow the New MLA Style Sheet.

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